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WAY OF THRIVING.

BY MR. THOMAS GOUGE.

WITH PREFATORY REMARKS BY DR. OWEN, DR. MANTON,
DR. BATES, AND MR. RICHARD BAXTER.

ALSO,

WITH A RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE, INCLUDING A SKETCH OF
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR; WRITTEN EXPRESSLY
FOR THIS EDITION,

BY THE REV. THOMAS BINNEY.

REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

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RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE,

INCLUDING

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF MR. GOUGE;

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR THIS EDITION,

BY THE REV. T. BINNEY.

On one occasion, when preaching for some benevolent object, I recommended from the pulpit the perusal of this book. This circumstance becoming known to the publishers, has led them to request that I would write for this edition a few prefatory words. I readily consent, willing to be thus constituted "a fellow-worker" with the excellent author, and not insensible to the honour of having my name associated, in recommending the Treatise, with those of Owen and Manton, Bates and Baxter. The work is some two hundred years old, and allowance must be made for that. It has some of the faults of its age; but one fault of the "times then present,"—one intolerable to us now,—it has not:—it is not a great big book, awkward to handle, wearisome to read; formidable from its size, tiresome from its prolixity. It is small, sprightly, pointed, vivacious,—altogether a very manageable and very readable book. Some of its stories from ecclesiastical history are no doubt fables. They may be read, however, as parables, and may then become both significant and instructive. The subject of which the author treats, and the views he maintains and inculcates respecting it, involve many questions of great difficulty; but there is not one which
he does not notice, on which something is not said, and said well. He writes like an earnest, plain, God-fearing man, by whom a text is felt to come with authority, and who believes it and relies upon it with the simple trust of an angel or a child. He pursues his object with much earnestness, enforces it with great power, and gives directions for carrying it out which, honestly followed, will make it easy. We have modern works much larger and more pretentious than this, on Gold, Money, Stewardship, The Law of Giving, and so on, but I am inclined to think that this small treatise is calculated to be as useful as any of them. It is more likely to be read than some, for it does not deter and frighten by its bulk; it calls for little time and no effort; its style is simple; its illustrative facts (the modern ones) striking and instructive; while its tone is so genial, and its hints and observations so just, pithy, racy, and practical, that, if read with anything like attention, the probability is, something or other will stick in the memory, melt the heart, touch the conscience, and move the hand.

Different ages of the Church witness different forms of doctrine, are marked by different habits of life, and are distinguished by different tests of fidelity. The merit of good works,—of charity in the form of indiscriminate almsgiving,—and such like extravagancies of one period, are succeeded in another by protests and oppositions of opinion which lead to extremes on the other side. Our fathers had to prove their loyalty to God by suffering,—"taking cheerfully the spoiling of their goods;" we are tested by having to give money;—this is almost the only trial of our times that presses on the professedly religious. Something of the sort, indeed, is common to all classes, but the activities of the Church are so many, various, and expensive, that calls on its liberality are felt or supposed to be very burdensome. Incessant applications annoy and irritate,
and are exceedingly wearing and unwelcome to the flesh. There is no way by which they can be sustained and met with ease, cheerfulness, and good temper, like that which is pointed out in this book,—namely, to be benevolent on system:—under the influence of love and faith, setting apart what conscience may dictate and circumstances allow, as a fund over which the individual retains no further power but that of apportioning it to such and such objects as may come before him, or which he may have previously decided to assist. It is wonderful what tranquillity this gives to the mind; what courtesy it can infuse into the manner with which a new applicant will be received; what impartiality it imparts to the judgment in looking at a case; and what freedom of movement it bestows on the hand, which has not now to take something from the man himself, but only to appropriate to specific objects what has already been parted with and given to God!

The author of the following work lived, however, at a time when fidelity had to be tested by suffering for God, as well as by giving to His cause. He was faithful in both. The personal character and example of the Man so harmonized with the rules and reasoning of the Writer, that I think it may be useful to give to those who may read his book, a few particulars respecting him.

The Rev. Thomas Gouge was the son of the Rev. Dr. William Gouge, who was minister of the parish of Blackfriars for six and forty years. He was born in the year 1605, at Bow, near Stratford, Middlesex. He was educated at Eton, and afterwards at King’s College, Cambridge. He obtained a fellowship, and resided at Cambridge for some years. His first preferment in the Church was to the living of Colsden, near Croydon, in Surrey; whence, in 1638, he removed to St. Sepulchre’s, in London. Of this parish he was the laborious minister for twenty-four years. In 1662, he was ejected for
nonconformity. He was distinguished, however, for his charity and moderation, and would seem afterwards to have partially conformed. He devoted himself to works of practical benevolence, and was willing to overlook points and scruples if they stood in the way of his great purpose.

During his incumbency of St. Sepulchre's he was remarkable for the earnestness and variety of his labours as a parochial minister. He not only preached regularly, but had catechetical services every morning in the Church, for the more ignorant of his parishioners: devoted himself to domiciliary visitation of the poor and sick; and set on foot many plans for the relief of the ignorant,—not only for affording them direct pecuniary help, but for doing them a better and higher service by teaching them to help themselves. He virtually formed preventive and reformatory establishments, setting the poor to work on materials which he furnished to them, paying them for their labour, and disposing of what they produced (chiefly by the loom) as well as he could,—often, as may be supposed, at a loss. From his efforts in this direction, the hint was received which led to the establishment, by Thomas Firmin, of what Tillotson calls "a much larger design,"—supposed to be what grew into the House of Occupation connected with Bridewell, in Bridge Street, Blackfriars. Speaking, in 1681, of this project of Mr. Firmin's, the preacher just referred to, says, "it hath now been prosecuted by him for some years, with such vigour and good success, that many poor children, and others who lived idle before, unprofitable to themselves and the public, are continually maintained at work, and taught to earn their own livelihood."

Mr. Gouge is spoken of, by those who knew him, as distinguished for his zeal, piety, and general excellence. Baxter says, "that he never heard any one person, of what rank, sort, or sect soever, speak one word to
his dishonour, or name any fault that they charged on his life or doctrine.” All concur in especially eulogizing his liberality and charity. He abounded in good works. His munificence was such that he is said “to have left far behind” him most of his contemporaries. When his income was reduced to £150 a year, he lived on the fifty, and gave away the hundred. He gave, however, “with singular sagacity and prudence, devising the most effectual ways of doing good, managing and disposing his charity to the best purposes, and to the greatest extent; always, if it were possible, making it to serve some end of piety and religion.” “The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand.” “He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever.”

During the latter years of his life, Mr. Gouge devoted himself to Wales, and expended vast labour and large sums in the promotion of religion and education there. He not only laid out all that he could spare from his own resources, but he excited the zeal, and stimulated the liberality, and thus secured the assistance of others. Persons of all ranks and conditions were induced to contribute to his favourite schemes. The nobility and gentry of the Principality, several of the bishops, many of the clergy, and “that perpetual fountain of charity, the city of London, led on and encouraged by the most bountiful example of the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen; —to all which he constantly added two-thirds of his own estate.” He was the means of establishing many schools; —to the extent, it is recorded, of three or four hundred. He procured, also, large editions of useful books, some of which he had to get translated into the Welch language,—which were given away, or sold at a moderate price. When the origin of the Bible Society is remembered, it is interesting to read that Mr. Gouge obtained a new and good impression
of the Welsh Scriptures, when hardly twenty copies could be found in all London—an edition of eight thousand—one thousand of which were freely given to the poor, and the rest sold at very reasonable rates, namely, "four shillings a piece, well-bound and clasped;—which was much cheaper than any English Bible was ever sold that was of so fair a print and paper." Welch editions of the Book of Common Prayer, of a Practical Exposition of the Church Catechism, and of various other works, were obtained and circulated by Mr. Gouge. He frequently preached, too, in Wales, authorized by an old university licence,—the force of which would be the more readily allowed, as, though unable to remain in office in the Church, he never became the minister of a separate congregation.

His nonconformist friends say that he evinced his charity by occasional communion in the Parish Churches;—his other friends, that, for several of the last years of his life, he continued in communion with the Church, "and," says Tillotson, "as he himself told me, thought himself obliged in conscience so to do." His preaching, however, was not without hindrances and opposition in some places. There were some who persecuted him even in Wales. But in spite of this, the good man used, with pleasure, to say, "that he had two livings, which he would not exchange for two of the greatest in England,"—meaning the Country in which he travelled and preached, founding schools and distributing books, and Christ's Hospital, where he used freely to catechize the poor children, in order to their establishment in the elementary principles of true religion.

The following document,—one of the annual reports of his labours,—will be read with interest. It is that of the year previous to his obtaining his 8000 Welsh Bibles, which will account for what appears under No. 2. It was printed on a broad sheet, and intended for the satisfaction of those who contributed to his charities:
"An account of what hath been done in Wales, this last year, from Midsummer, 1674, to Lady-day, 1675, in pursuance of the above said Trust, upon the encouragement of divers worthy persons to this pious and charitable design.

1. In fifty-one of the chief towns of Wales 812 poor children have been and are put to school, to learn English, over and above the 500 put to school the last year, by the charity of others, before this trust began.

2. There have been bought and distributed in several families, thirty-two Welch Bibles, which were all that could be had in Wales or London.

3. 240 New Testaments in Welch, to be given away to poor people that can read Welch.

4. 500 'Whole Duty of Man' in Welch, to be distributed in like manner.

Which pious and charitable undertaking hath already provoked divers of the better sort of the Welch, to put above 500 of the poorest Welch children to school, upon their account. So that about 1850 in all are already put to school to learn to read English. Attested by us,

John Tillotson, Edward Stillingfleet,
Benjn. Witchcot, John Meriton,
Simon Ford, Thomas Gouge,
William Durham, Mathew Pool,
Thomas Firmin."

There are names here that can never die. They belong to history! They were subscribed to that bit of printed paper, testifying to the fidelity with which Mr. Gouge had acted for others, while spending his own. Some of these men were Conformists, some Nonconformists; the most of them ministers, one at least, if not more, belonged to the laity. One became Archbishop of Canterbury, and was of great reputation for eloquence as a preacher; others are celebrated as learned and laborious, and are known in the Church
by their distinguished writings. Tillotson, Pool, Stillingfleet!—he was no ordinary individual, whom such men "delighted to honour," and with whose name they were proud to have their own associated.

Mr. Gouge died in the 77th year of his age, October 29th, 1681. His death was unexpected. He died, as some have wished to die, suddenly, silently, and alone. He passed away in his sleep. It seemed to his friends rather translation than death. Like David and Enoch, "he served his generation," and "walked with God." He lay down at night, committing himself to His gracious protection; in the morning "he was not,"—"God had taken him."

He appears to have been a person who not only exemplified the virtue which he recommends in this book, but who was clothed and adorned with every other. He "put on Jesus Christ." Like the Master, he did not escape detraction; but, as Baxter says, "it was easier to traduce than to imitate so divine a charity as his." His whole heart was taken up with projects of benevolence,—his hands busy in carrying them out. It was his meat and drink thus to act. His love and zeal in these things "made all pains and difficulties seem nothing to him." He would rise up early and sit up late; he continued the same diligence and industry to the last, "though he was in the three-score and seventeenth year of his age." He had much to endure, but, for the love of God and man, he endured it not only with patience, but with pleasure. "So that," concludes Dr. Tillotson, "all things considered, there have not, since the primitive times of Christianity, been many among the sons of men, to whom that glorious character of the Son of God might be better applied—"He went about doing good."
TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

The more excellent any duties of religion are, the more useful unto the glory of God, and the good of mankind; the more diligent and industrious is the common enemy of such things, either to corrupt the minds of men about them, or to divert their hearts and affections from them. Of this nature is charity and bounty towards the poor, and such others as are declared and proposed as fit objects of them in Scripture; and such treatment hath it met with. Whoever readeth the word of God with any attention or understanding, and considers the various disposal of the conditions of mankind, of christians and believers in this world, according to the sovereign pleasure of his holy, wise providence, cannot but judge, that among all the external duties which are required of us in this world, there is none more necessary, none more useful, none wherein the glory of God is more concerned than the due and abundant
exercise of the fruits of charity towards its proper objects. The commands for it are so multiplied, the motives unto it are so excellent, the rules and directions for its exercise so plain and express, that it cannot wholly be neglected, without an open contempt of the authority, love, and wisdom of God: hence the Scriptures plainly pronounce all religion to be vain, where this grace and its fruits are separated from it. Whereas, therefore, it was a design beneath the craft of the old serpent to seduce the minds of men into an open rejection or condemnation of it, unless he could at the same time have wrought them unto a general renunciation of all religion; he made it his business in the days of superstition and darkness, to corrupt them with false notions about it, and to divert its exercise from its proper objects, that under an apprehension of its necessity, the real use and benefit of it unto the glory of God and advantage to the souls of men, might be utterly lost. And the success he had herein, through the foresight which the subtlety of his nature, and long experience have furnished him with, hath been of no small use unto him, after the first design of it was in a great measure defeated. Hence it is, that whilst the true nature of charity, its proper use, fruits, objects, and ends, with that respect which it hath unto God and our own souls, were lost, obscured, depraved or corrupted, and all made subservient unto a proud imagination of merit and other various superstitions: none more promoted the outward works of it than he, and they abounded amongst men. But when the false
ends, rules, and motives unto it, which ignorance and superstition had imposed upon its exercise were discovered and decried, he made use of pretences from former abuses to alienate the minds of men from a due apprehension of the absolute necessity of the constant and diligent exercise of this grace in such outward duties whereby others might be relieved; so he became a gainer by his loss. When all things in point of doctrine, as to the nature and work of charity, unto the defeatment of superstition were rightly stated among us, men grew cold and regardless of their duty in it, as though they were resolved they would not do well unless they might do it on evil motives and for ill ends. And because, formerly, too much had been ascribed unto it, to the corruption of all religion, some think it reason enough quite to neglect it. But these methods of Satan have been sufficiently detected; and I suppose most men are, and may be easily convinced, that there is a wide distance between performing works of charity to merit the salvation of our souls, and the neglect of them unto their damnation; and that there is a safe, plain path to walk between them.

But the truth is, the most forcible objections against the due exercise of charity, and abounding in the fruits of it, are those which arise from that influence which unbelief and corrupt affections have upon the minds of men. And amongst those the chiefest, and that which men judge to have the evidence of demonstration in it, is this: that what they part with for the relief of others, doth in proportion
decrease their own enjoyments. And whereas, the minds of many do greatly extend their desires beyond their present possession of earthly things; and the necessary occasions, as they suppose, of the most part, at present and for the future with respect unto their families being proportioned in a scanty measure unto what they enjoy; the force of this objection is great and worketh effectually on all occasions of the due exercise of charity. Neither can it be otherwise conceived if respect be had unto the present instance only; for he that maketh the best and most advantageous bargain or purchase, is sure enough to be a loser by it, if there be not a time of making a return in his way of trade: but the common assurance hereof, is sufficient to satisfy the minds of men in parting with their money on such occasions. Wherefore against this last stronghold of Satan in the imaginations of men against the due exercise of charity and bounty, the author of the ensuing address hath planted that battery from Scripture, reason, and experience, whereby what seemeth to be of real strength in it, is utterly demolished. His design is not to prove, nor will he undertake that he who is bountiful to others shall surely thrive in this world, if he have no other end in his charity and bounty, but only that he may so thrive. But on a right and due performance of this duty in obedience unto the command of God, out of love to Christ, according to the rules, and for its proper ends, he undertakes to demonstrate that no man shall be a loser thereby. Yea, he goes further, and proves from plain
testimonies of Scripture, (against whose evidence there is no rising up, but through express unbelief) confirmed with signal instances of experience, that in the ordinary way of God's dealing with professors of the gospel, their charity, liberality, and bounty shall certainly conduce unto their advantage in this world, especially where they are eminent in their exercise: so that the truth lies absolutely on the other side of this objection; and no more is' required for the satisfaction of the minds of men herein, but that they exercise faith in the promises of God, in proportion unto that trust which they have in the advantages of trade from common prudence and experience. For in neither way do men ordinarily expect present, sensible returns; nor will an industrious person be discouraged if he find no present gain in his trade, or meet with some losses, whilst he is in the way that rationally and probably leads to advantage. Nor ought we to prescribe other measures to ourselves, nor expect immediate visible advantage as to the concerns of this world, in what we trade with for immortality and glory, especially as we have the security of God's promise to rely upon, which so far exceeds what the minds of men may fancy to themselves, from the ordinary course of things here below. Leave, therefore, the determination of times, seasons, ways, and manner of things, unto the sovereign pleasure of God; and there is no truth more certain than what is here proposed; namely, that abounding in works of charity is "the surest and safest way of thriving" in this world. And an eminent truth it is,
which the reverend author hath rescued from general inadver- 
tency or oblivion, the effects whereof have been little 
discerned, because faith in it hath been so much lost. And 
I must add that Divine Providence hath cast the discovery 
and defence of this great and useful truth upon a person 
eminently suited unto the work to which he is called: for, 
whereas, he is deprived of all outward advantages (as well 
as many others) not only of increasing his wealth in the 
world, but also of ordinary supplies for himself and family, 
beyond his own private patrimony, he abundantly mani-
fests himself to live in the faith of that truth which he 
deavour to implant in the minds and consciences of 
others; and doth but invite men into the same belief and 
practice with himself. And the truth which he pleadeth 
for, is so fully confirmed and illustrated by himself, that 
there remains no more for me or others to do unto that 
end, but to give our testimony unto it, and to endeavour to 
promote the acceptation of it with all professors of the 
gospel, which I hereby do, and shall do, as God shall 
administer opportunity.

JOHN OWEN.

GOOD READER,

Thou hast here put into thy hands an exhortation to 
charity, a duty so lovely and God-like, that without other 
arguments it bespeaketh its own excellence; but the dull
heart of man needs to be excited and quickened: we all love a cheap religion, but the costly and expensive duties are too often neglected and declined; therefore, the reverend author, in this treatise, thought fit to recommend the practice of a more liberal and diffusive almsgiving with the more earnestness to well-disposed christians. A meet advocate for so good a cause; we willingly hear every man in his own faculty; and none are so fit to exhort others unto charity, as those who are eminently charitable themselves.

For the argument he useth, I am fully of his mind, that liberality doth not impoverish men, but rather enriches them, as wells are the sweeter but not the emptier for frequent draining: a truth countenanced by Scripture, reason, and the constant observation and experience of the world.

1. By Scripture, witness the many temporal promises scattered throughout the word of God, and applied to the charitable. If any reply that these things were spoken pro more fæderis, according to that dispensation of the covenant when eternal happiness was more sparingly received; and that temporal things are not so absolutely promised under the gospel, as under the pedagogy of the law, because life and immortality are now brought to light. I answer, that yet God doth not discontinue the dispensation: for as the promise of eternal life was not wholly shut out of that covenant, and yet the temporal blessing did more visibly appear in it; so now the temporal blessing
is not wholly shut out, though the gospel runneth mainly on spiritual and eternal blessings. Yea, and I will add further, that it seemeth by our Lord's own speech, (Luke vi. 38.) and Paul's quotation, (2 Cor. ix. 9.) that the Old Testament promise of plenty to the almsgiver, doth belong to the gospel, and standeth firm and in full force under the New Testament dispensation; and so seemeth to be exempt from the lot of his fellows, or to be a peculiar and reserved case.

2. It seemeth also agreeable to reason; for the Devil is not the dispenser of temporal blessings, but God; and a faithful improvement of them is not the way to forfeit, but to secure and increase them,—faithful stewards have not the trust taken out of their hands, but the unfaithful. Add to this, that God loveth to pay in kind, and to retaliate with men, both in rewards and punishments; "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Moreover, consider how conducible it is to the good of the world, that unbelief should now and then be sensibly confuted. "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts;" and in instances of this kind God submittesth to a trial from experience. Lastly, how rationally may it be presumed, that men who have a large heart, shall not be disabled by their bounty; but still have a sufficiency to perform more acts of that kind, so that the prejudiced world may have no cause to think that their improvident bounty hath brought want upon them: if indeed it were so, I plead not for it; but the most regular bounty is in the world's esteem
improvident; for they think all lost that is not reserved for
them and theirs, or expended on their lusts.

3. I allege the observation and experience both of
ancient and modern times, which hath always proved that
this scattering tendeth to increase, as the loaves in the gos-
pel miracle were increased in the distribution. Chrysostom
is often improving this observation. I remember he saith
in one place of the poor, "that they give rather than take." And again, "do not think alms to be a wasteful profusion,
but a traffic; you receive more than you give," &c. I
might relate here what Paulus Diaconus observeth of
the emperor Tiberius the Second, who was a great alms-
giver, and the large streams of his bounty were still fed by
the strange and unexpected supplies which God sent him
from time to time; as by finding casually a vast treasure
hid in the palace, as also by the treasures of Narses hid in
Italy, and other means: he was never weary of giving, and
God was never weary of blessing, that he might still give
more.

But I must forbear multiplying these instances, lest this
preambulary writing swell beyond all due proportion.

Upon these reasons I think the argument enforced in
this book sound and good, and proper to its end, and hath
the more force, because it attacketh covetousness in its own
quarters, a piece of wisdom which I observe in our Lord
Jesus Christ every where.

But yet I would interpose these cautions:

1st. That temporal things are not to be looked upon as
the chief reward, nor to be our great motive; the eternal reward together with the conscience of our duty or love to God must suffice, and for other things refer it to him, for what may be expected in this kind. There are in this and every duty four sorts of principles which men are actuated by; some false and rotten, as vain-glory; (Matt. vi. 1.) some more tolerable, as fear of temporal judgments, and hope of temporal mercies; some very good and sound, as hope of eternal reward; (Heb. vi. 9, 10, 11.) some rare and excellent, as thankfulness and love to God, a due impress of his great love to us in Christ, (2 Cor. viii. 8, 9.) the glory of God, (1 Cor. x. 31; Phil. i. 2.) complacency in the work, &c. Now they that would be sincere, should be tender of their motives.

2nd. God will try our faith. For a great while this recompense may be suspended. (Eccl. xi. 1.) "Thou shalt find it after many days." It may be that if you do not find it, your children may: for it bringeth an extraordinary blessing on our families. (Ps. xxxvii. 26.) At other times the recompense may be more speedy, as in increasing the widow's oil. (1 Kings xvii. 13, 16.)

3rd. We should not lift up a secret desire of worldly increase to satisfy our covetous minds. In short this motive may be urged to check temptations to sordid sparing. And when God maketh any such returns of our bounty, it should be observed and improved as a confirmation of our faith, and an encouragement to our labour of love, and a plea to quicken others from our own experience,
when the fear of want maketh them backward to charity. I have no more now to add but prayers, that God would bless this treatise to thee, and grant to the author an all-sufficiency of all things, that he may still abound in every good work.

Thine in the Lord’s service,

THOMAS MANTON.

READER,

God, whose right is supreme, in our persons and all that we possess, has imposed a tribute on us, not for his own profit, but for the good of those who are his deputed receivers. And his most wise providence has ordered the conditions of men here, so that some abound, and others are in want; that they may glorify him by the exercise of several graces: the poor by an humble patience, and contented resignation to his will; and the rich by a compassionate liberality to their brethren.

The performance of this duty gives us a regular enjoyment of what we have; it is our Saviour’s command, "Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you." Till the first fruits were offered up, (under the law,) none of the Israelites might eat of the new corn, it was profane to them; but afterwards the whole harvest was consecrated and granted to their free use.

The neglect of paying what God has reserved as an
acknowledgment that we have received all from him, makes a forfeiture of our estates. And how foolish is it to deny a part at his command, who can by right and power deprive us of all in a moment! But though God's title is paramount, yet he is pleased to invite us to acts of charity by the most persuasive arguments: "Godliness is profitable unto all things," (and especially this branch of it) "having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" and to confirm our belief that it has a happy influence upon our prosperity here, it is added, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation." God signs himself our debtor for that which is laid out for him, as if it were not all his own; "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again;" and that not only from the treasury of eternity hereafter, but in temporal blessings here: so that if we consider our future or present interest, there are great encouragements to remove the hindrances of this blessed duty.

Covetousness, as it implies an eagerness and excess in procuring an estate, springs from different inclinations, sometimes from sensuality, to make provision for the flesh; or from ambition, by that means to obtain honour; and others of a like nature: but when the guilty affection is mortified, the immoderate desire of riches which was a symptomatical distemper ceases with it. But the usual springs of covetousness, as it implies a tenacious humour, and irregular, base keeping what they possess, are:
1. A jealousy of losing what was got with much diligence, care, and labour.

2. Solicitude for the future, men are anxious to preserve what they have; and ardent to procure what they have not, to secure themselves against all possible want. Now the word of God assures us that the best way to preserve and increase our estates is by giving liberal supplies to the wants of others. "The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand." He that considers where he may disperse his bounty, and place a benefit to the best advantage, has a special protection; and as he is like God in giving, so he shall be, in not being the poorer for his giving: there is an inseparable connexion between "Give, and it shall be given unto you." Charity is a productive grace, that enriches the giver more than the receiver. The great Lord of all things, sometimes by admirable means, beyond all human expectation blesses the merciful, and gives a present reward, as if it were with his own hand. As there are numerous examples of God's justice in punishing the covetous, sometimes by sending a gangrene into their estate which consumes it before their eyes; sometimes by the profuseness of their children, who in a short time waste all which was got by excessive sparing: so it is as visible that his providence blesses those in their persons and children, who have been faithful stewards in dispensing what is committed to their trust. This, I think, should ever prevail with men of sense. Do they not every day venture their estates for gain, though a
fire, a shipwreck, a bankrupt, or innumerable other disasters may undo them? And shall an unfaithful world have more credit with us than the God of truth? Is not his power over all things? He governs the wills of men, commands the winds and seas, and makes the fields fruitful.

But the sons of the earth may object, that those who are charitable are not always prosperous, but are sometimes in exigencies themselves. To this a just answer may be given:

I. The mere external work of charity does not entitle to the blessings of the promise, but when it is performed aright.

1. From what is our own,—some that are enriched by unjust means, think to quiet their consciences, and appease God, by giving part to good uses; as if he would be a receiver of their thefts, and corrupted with a share in their spoils; but he hates robbing for a burnt-offering.

2. The end must be sincere,—to imitate the Father of mercies in that attribute which is his dearest glory, by a liberal relief of our brethren.

3. The affection in giving must be free and joyful:—it is the heart that gives gives price to our gifts in God's esteem, a cup of cold water taken from the spring of love shall not fail of a reward; but the richest gifts without it are of no value with him.

II. Supposing a christian to abound in works of charity, and to perform them according to God's will, it is possible he may not have a reward here, in order that our charity
may not be with a chief regard to our temporal interest, and for other wise reasons; but this special case will not infringe the truth of God's promise. When God encouraged the obedience of children to their parents, and promised them long life in the land of Canaan, was it deceitful dealing if he translated a dutiful child to live for ever in heaven, that infinitely better country?

If I promise one a shilling for his day's labour, has he reason to complain if he receives more? God may give above, but never below his promise. He reserves a liberty to be better than his word to his servants; and this consideration should inflame us to this duty. The crown of life and treasures of heaven are motives of a nobler strain, and more worthy the breast of a christian than any present payment; not but that a believer might have an eye to temporal benefits, as the manifestations of God's goodness, but chiefly to eternal. In short, blessings in both worlds are promised as the reward of charity. O the happy advantage of rich men if they had hearts to improve it.

WILLIAM BATES.

GOOD READER,

The author of this book doth not here solicit your charity for nothing, nor for himself; but for high and honourable designs, though managed by a man not high in the pomp and splendour of the world; yea, for the high
design of your salvation. God can relieve the poor, and do good to other men without us; but it is our honour to be made his stewards; and his great mercy to us, to receive that honour; yea, to have a willing heart, though we want a purse. Who hath not some talents by which he may do good, if he improve them, and for which at the time of retribution he must give account? If Peter and John must say, "Silver and gold have we none," yet such as they have, they may and must give. Charity in general, is praised by all sorts of men, even by them who will not practise it; yea, by the destroyers who set themselves against it! even our Judases that bear the bag, pretend charity to the poor, while they grudge it unto Christ, as needless waste. Yea, it is for pretended charity, that charity and the charitable are destroyed, and cruelty is used to men's souls and bodies. Will not all the world then condemn us if we be not charitable? Papists are for good works on one account, and Protestants on another, yea, Mahometans and Heathens on another; but all cry up charity and good works, and yet in what do men more sin against their own professions, except it be in their want of the highest act of charity, even their love to God, and holiness and glory.

It is a pity men should need any other motive than that which is fetched from God's favour, and the heavenly reward; but yet Christ, who hath promised an hundredfold (in value) in this life, alloweth us to use that promise as our lower motive. Three sorts of judges will censure
this book, which persuadeth men that good works are the way to thrive, that is, mere reason, faith and experience. Mere reason will be ready to say, that this is but affected talk to open men's purses, and not believed by him that writeth it; because it is an unlikely thing. Faith will soon consent to it, that at least we shall receive a reward in heaven, and so much here as God seeth to be best. But the question is, what experience saith. They that never tried the way, can have no experience of it. And two sorts more there are that may be able here to give no testimony to it: 1st, Those who have miscarried in the manner, and have taken those for good works, which (at least hic et nunc) were none. 2nd, Those whom God seeth fit to try (as Job,) and keep low in the world, either to save themselves from sin, or to exercise the charity of others. For my own part, seeing the author desireth me to speak my own experience, I must say, that I never prospered more in my small estate, than when I gave most, and needed least. I have in another book of this author said something of the quota pars,—how much must be given, whether the tenth at least? my own rule hath been, 1st., to contrive to need as little as may be myself, and lay out none on need-nots; but to live frugally on a little. 2nd., to serve God in my place upon that little competency which he allowed me to myself; that what I had myself might be as good a work for common good as that which I gave to others. 3rd., to do all the good I could with all the rest, preferring the most public, the most
durable, and _caeteris paribus_ the nearest. And the more I have practised this, the more I have had to do it with; and when I gave almost all, more came in, (without being any one's gift,) I scarce knew how, at least unexpected. But when by improvidence I have cast myself into necessity by using more upon myself, or upon things in themselves of less importance, I have prospered much less than when I did otherwise. And when I had contented myself to devote that stock which I had gotten, to charitable uses, after my death, instead of laying it out at present, that so I might secure somewhat for myself while I lived, in all probability that is like to be lost; whereas when I took the present opportunity and trusted God for the time to come, I wanted nothing, and lost nothing.

Experiences are contemptible to none but atheists, who believe not in God's providence. I remember that great and excellent person whose published "Contemplations" hint the same to the world, though without his consent, hath told me how the strange providences of God in laming and disabling his horses, and other impediments, in a journey towards London, for worldly advantages on the Lord's day, when he was young, did convince him, and engage him ever after to spend that day as he hath since done, and hath directed his children to do. God governeth this world, and hath some previous rewards and punishments—stops and helps, though the great and full retribution be hereafter. I persuade none imprudently to cast away their estates, and make themselves beholden to
others: but I say with this reverend author, that I am persuaded, did men devote themselves and all that they have, to do the greatest good they can do in the world, it would not only make life sweeter, consciences quieter, and death easier; but also be a notable means of God's prospering them in their estates, except in some cases of special trial, or needful and profitable affliction.

RICHARD BAXTER.
THE SUREST AND SAFEST WAY OF THRIVING.

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward.

And whosoever shall give unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.—Matthew x. 41, 42.

The troubles whereunto God bringeth his ministers and people, though they be many and great, are not more, nor greater, than the comforts which he affordeth unto them to support and encourage them in their troubles. Instance this chapter, and the sermon of Christ therein recorded, concerning those sore trials whereunto his Church and children should be brought. As any kind of affliction is foretold, a proper and peculiar kind of consolation is usually annexed: therefore, to establish the hearts of his suffering servants, and to encourage their succourers, He closes up His sermon with the words of the text, wherein He declareth not only the high account which he had of His ministers and people themselves, but also of them who should yield any relief, or, upon His account shew kindness to them, assuring them that "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's
THE SUREST AND SAFEST

reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward."

The words in brief, contain a declaration of that great benefit which they bring to themselves, who afford any relief and succour to minsters, or other saints; teaching, That there is no such way to fill our treasures, as by emptying them for God.

For the clearing of these words, I shall briefly shew you:

1. Who is here meant by a Prophet? And who by a Righteous Man?

2. What is meant by receiving them?

3. What is the reward which followeth thereupon?

I. For the first, who is meant here by a prophet? and who by a righteous man?

By a prophet, our Saviour here meaneth not only extraordinary ministers, such as were immediately and extra-ordinarily inspired by the Holy Ghost, or who had extraordinary revelations to foretel things to come, but also ordinary ministers of the word, and interpreters of the Scriptures. (John iv. 44. Rev. xi. 18.)

By righteous men He meaneth His saints, or such as testify their justification through faith in Christ, by their sanctification, and fruits of a good conscience, whom commonly the Scripture styleth saints.

II. For the second, what is meant by receiving these?

For answer thereunto, you must know there are two things whereunto this receiving may have a respect.

1. To the word and message of a minister, and so it signifies the hearkening to and embracing their holy counsel and doctrine.
2. To the person of a minister, and so it signifies the harbouring or shewing kindness to him, as is evident from the instance of cold-water, given unto a prophet or righteous man, expressed in the following verse. Both these are implied under the phrase of receiving a prophet, viz., his doctrine, by embracing and submitting to it, and his person, by harbouring, succouring, and relieving him according to his need.

By the receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet, is meant a succouring and relieving him for his particular calling's sake, eo nomine, because he is a prophet, so by receiving a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, intendeth the same thing, viz., the relieving him for his general calling's sake, because he is a Christian, a child of God, and a member of Christ.

III. For the third particular, what is here meant by the reward of a prophet and of a righteous man? I answer, these phrases of receiving a prophet, and a righteous man's reward, may be taken actively, or passively: actively, for that reward which a prophet or a righteous man giveth; passively, for that which is by God given to the one and to the other. The reward which a prophet giveth, is ministerially to preach the word of reconciliation to such as receive them, as Peter did to Cornelius, (Acts x. 34.) to pray for them, as Abraham for Abimelech, (Gen. xx. 7, 17.) and to bless them, as Melchizedek blessed Abraham. (Gen. xiv. 19.)

The reward which a righteous man giveth, is privately to instruct and edify, to pray for, and to be a good pattern and example of righteousness to such as entertain or otherwise relieve him.

The reward which is given by God to either of these,
for that kindness which any shew unto them, is such a surpassing and excellent weight of glory as cannot be expressed by the tongue of men or angels, yet different in degrees, as is evident. (Dan. xii. 3.)

Some take these phrases of receiving a prophet, and a righteous man's reward, in the former sense, actively, and others passively; I conceive it may be taken in both.

The words thus explained do afford unto us several points of doctrine.

From the duty here expressed of receiving and relieving prophets and righteous men, with the manner of setting it down, we may observe:

**Doct. I.** That all needful succour and good entertainment is to be afforded to ministers of the gospel.

This is the main and principal point intended.

**Doct. II.** Christian kindness is to be shewn not only to ministers, but also to all the members of Christ. For our blessed Saviour contents not himself to have mentioned a prophet, but also addeth a righteous man.

These two sorts make up the household of faith, to whom the Apostle exhorteth Christians especially to do good. (Gal. vi. 10.)

**Quest.** Is our charity to extend no further?

**Ans.** Yes, even to all that are in want, but especially to such as have a particular relation to Christ, as being his members, or ministers, because Christ in them is after an especial manner succoured and relieved. It will be, therefore, our wisdom to take notice of the extent of this duty, and in all we do, either for Christians or others, to see to it, that what we do, is done for the Lord's, and for conscience' sake, to the one in compassion to his members, to the other in obedience to his will.
WAY OF THRIVING.

Doct. III. According to the kindness which we shew, shall our reward be. He that receiveth and relieveth a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward, and he that receiveth and relieveth a righteous man, shall receive the reward of a righteous man.

“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward.” (v. 42.)

These words are added by our Saviour to the former, to anticipate some objections, which might be made thereupon, as also more fully to explain the beforementioned points.

Objec. I. May be thus made, These preachers and professors of the Gospel are but mean persons, and little in esteem, what great reward can be expected for entertaining them?

Ans. As little as they be, be they as inconsiderable and contemptible as the proud world make them, yet are they not so little in the eyes of the Lord, but that he will reward all such as are friendly to them.

Objec. II. I myself am but poor, and can do but little for them.

Ans. Though thy kindness be ever so small, as small as a cup of water, and that cold, taken out of the river, without any pains or cost to heat it, yea, but one cup-full thereof, and no more (supposing that to be the most thou canst do for them,) yet it shall be rewarded by Him who respecteth the willingness of the giver, more than the greatness of the gift.

The greatest difficulty in the words is, who are here meant by little ones, for whose sake the reward is promised.
By little ones, our Saviour meaneth no other than such as in the foregoing verse, he had styled prophets and righteous men.

They are called little ones in two respects.
1. In regard of the world's esteem of them.
2. In regard of their own account of themselves.

First, They are little in the world's eye. The world, which judgeth not according to inward worth, have them in low esteem; it fares with the servants as it fared with their master, they are despised and rejected, and trodden under foot of men; of old they were accounted desolate and forsaken. (Isa. lxii. 4.) In the Apostle's time, the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things. (1 Cor. iv. 13.) Experience of all ages verifieth as much, and, among other ages, our own giveth not the least evidence.

That comfort and contentment which God's people find in the Lord, and the light of His countenance, yea, that hope they have of finding grace in His eyes, makes them the less to mind and seek after the honour, wealth, and promotions of the world, and commonly they have but little of it. Now the world judgeth according to outward, earthly, and worldly glory, it discerneth not the spiritual glory of the saints. (1 John, iii. 1.) Judge not of men according to the world's judgment: think not ever the more meanly of saints, because the world thinks so of them. They are the highly favoured of the Most High: they are such of whom the world is not worthy, they are the excellent ones. (Ps. xxvi. 3.) But whatever they be in deed, in the eye of the world they are but little ones.

Secondly, They are little in their own eyes. (Gen. xviii. 27.) We read how Abraham, in speaking to God, styles himself no better than dust and ashes. (Gen. xxxii. 10.)
And again, Jacob acknowledgeth himself unworthy, or less than the least of God's mercies.

The ground thereof may be, because the saints best know themselves, since they, more thoroughly than other men, search their hearts, and observe their ways, and compare themselves with the pure and perfect law of God, and take notice of their inward secret corruptions, as well as of their outward and visible transgressions; and thus they come to know more of themselves, than any other can, or may suspect of them; and this clearer sight of themselves brings them down, and lays them low. This made St. Paul to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24.) This is a note of true grace, and of a sanctified heart. They are the poor in spirit, not the proud in spirit, that are Christ's blessed ones. (Matt. v. 3.) The false disciple thinketh highly of himself, and would not be accounted a little one, like a true disciple of Christ, but some great one, like to Simon Magus, (Acts viii. 8, 9.) This spirit is a satanical spirit; try the spirit by this note, whether it be of God or not.

But though all the servants of God are, on the before-mentioned account, little ones, yet there are some among them less than others, as regards their offices and stations in the Church: some are in higher, others are in lower offices; some are in office, others not. So, also, as regards their parts and gifts and graces: some are strong, and others are weak; some the chief, others the least of saints; some as the head, and others but as the finger or the foot. And it is probable that the text hath the most special respect (and the emphasis of it is the greater) to the least of all these little ones, and so the expression is, "Inasmuch
as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 40.)

This I the rather take notice of, to give a hint to Christians in their charitable distributions—to have an eye to such ministers or Christians as are more obscure, and less considerable in the world. Possibly, when those of greater worth and remark may taste deeply of their bounty, every one, almost, hath a kindness for them. In the meantime, there may be some poor hidden ones whose worth is less, but their wants are greater; who being low in those gifts or graces which would commend them to the more public notice, are almost buried in forgetfulness. It is true, that by how much the more eminent the person is that is relieved, (caeteris paribus,) by so much the more excellent the work. Yet special care should be taken that the more obscure and least deserving among all that belong to God be not forgotten.

The words thus explained afford unto us two special points of doctrine.

**Doct. I.** God taketh notice of every one of his saints, even of the least of them, and of kindness shewn to them.

Though Joseph was but a lad, and sold as a slave, yet being one of the Church—one of the little ones,—yet in Egypt God takes notice of him, and of that kindness which was shewed to him. (Gen. xxxix. 5.) Many other like examples are noted in the Scripture; but none more fit for our purpose than the example of Lazarus: Though he were a poor beggar, and full of sores, and despised of Dives, and all his household, yet God took such notice of him, as he made his angels attend him. Yea, God took notice of the kindness which the dogs shewed him, for their licking of his sores is recorded to all ages. (Luke xvi. 20.) Note
those expressions of the Psalmist: “But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.” (Ps. xl. 17.) And again: “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. (Ps. xxxiv. 6.)

**Quest.** If you ask why the Lord taketh notice of every one of his saints?

**Ans.** 1. They are all his children, and of his household; therefore as a tender and careful father and master, he careth for every one. Yea, they are all members of the body of Christ. Now, the head taketh care of every member, even the least, and taketh notice of every kindness done to them.

2. They are all by reason of grace in them, as jewels and precious stones; therefore as a provident jeweller, he will look to every one of them. Yea, that often which appeareth least, may be of greater worth,—as a little diamond is of more value than a far greater pebble.

This affordeth a singular ground of comfort to such as in this world are desolate and forsaken: though they be left alone, as Elijah was. (1 Kings, xix. 10.) And “As a pelican in the wilderness,” or, “an owl of the desert,” or, “a sparrow alone upon the house-top,” as the Psalmist expresseth. (Ps. cii. 6, 7.) Yet is the Lord with them, and takes care of them. Now, if the Lord be with us, and taketh care of us, what need we fear? How should this encourage us to extend our charity to any one of the saints and members of Christ, though mean and little in the world, and not able to recompense us; and though none take notice thereof, to consider that the Lord taketh notice, and will abundantly recompense every good work—yea, the least kindness we do unto them. “God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have shewed
towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” (Heb. vi. 10.) Wherefore, God’s not forgetting their labour of love in ministering to the saints, doth imply, that as God taketh notice of their beneficence, so he is, and will be ever mindful of such and such persons, to support and succour, and in every way to do them good.

And if God will thus remember those that remember the least of His, how will he take it if they are neglected? Beloved, how is it with God’s little ones at this day? Is it not very low with many of them? God takes notice how very low it is; and whether you will or no, God will not forsake them; but that I may use the words of Mordecai to Esther, with some variation: If you altogether hold your hand at this time, relief shall arise to them some other way, but you and your house (take heed that word be not verified upon you) shall be destroyed. But who knows whether you are come to your estates for such a time as this?

And thus I come to the second and main point of doctrine, which ariseth from the reward promised to such as shew the least kindness to a minister, or righteous man, though it be but a cup of cold water, they shall in no wise lose their reward. Whence we may observe—

Doct. II. That the least work of charity shewn to a minister or righteous man, shall be abundantly recompensed, and that not only hereafter, but likewise here on earth.

Though our beneficence ought to extend unto all who are in want and come within the verge of our knowledge and power, “According as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.” (Gal. vi. 10.) Yet I confine my discourse here to ministers and righteous ones, because they only are implied under those little ones mentioned in my text.
Way of Thriving.

That merciful men shall be abundantly recompensed hereafter in heaven for their works of charity, there is no doubt, being so clearly expressed in the word of God, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (Luke xvi. 9.) And again: "Charge them that are rich in this world, ... that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.)

But the great question is concerning temporal reward, whether Christian charity, rightly performed, shall be recompensed here in this life with temporal blessings: so that what men give in a way of charity, there is ground to expect it shall be here returned into their bosoms again with increase.

I deny not but that a charitable man may become poor, and be reduced into some straights, through suretyship, negligence in his calling, or in respect of some secret sin, wherein he liveth, which may justly bring a temporal curse upon him: so that his liberality in such cases may not be a sufficient fence against want and penury. But this, I say, that penuriousness towards the poor is the readiest way to poverty: so Christian charity, rightly performed, is the surest way to plenty and abundance, it being usually rewarded with temporal blessings here, as well as with eternal hereafter. Where is the man to be found, that is the poorer by what he hath given to the poor? How many are the instances of such which have met with some signal blessings from God in this life, as the reward of their liberality?
This may seem a paradox to many uncharitable men, that giving should be the surest way of getting, and that the more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to thrive and prosper in the world. Yet, nothing is more clearly laid down in the Scripture, and found to be true by the experience of multitudes of God's people in all ages. And I am verily persuaded, that there is seldom any man that maketh conscience of this duty, who giveth out to the poor proportionally to what God hath bestowed on him, and with an honest and upright heart, but if he do observe the passages of God's providence towards him, he shall find the same doubled, and redoubled upon him in temporal blessings. I dare challenge all the world to give me one instance, or at least any considerable number of instances, of any truly merciful men, whose charity hath undone them. But as living wells, the more they are drawn the more freely they spring and flow; so the substance of charitable men doth oftentimes, if not ordinarily, multiply in the very distribution; even as the five loaves, and few fishes did multiply in their breaking and distributing, and the widow's oil increased by the pouring it out.

But these bare assertions, being no full convictions, for the better clearing the truth of this doctrine, I shall prove it by Scripture, examples, and reasons.

1. For Scripture proofs there are very many—both in the Old and New Testament. What the apostle saith of godliness, It is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life, and of that which is to come: (1 Tim. iv. 8.) the like I may say of charity, it is profitable unto all things, having promises of temporal blessings, as well as of spiritual and eternal.

"Thou shalt surely give unto thy brother, and thy heart
Way of Thriving.

shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.” (Deut. xv. 10.) It is not thine own labour, or care, but the Divine blessing that maketh rich, and of that blessing behold! here's a Scripture-entail upon the liberal. And the like we have—“Honour the Lord with thy substance,” by giving out a portion thereof for the relief of the poor: “so shall thy barns be filled with plenty,” and as thy barns, so thy shop, thy cellars, warehouses, where thou bestowest thy goods, be filled with abundance; “and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” (Prov. iii. 9, 10.) This seemeth to be an hyperbolical expression, yet it signifies no less than this, that God's usual way is to make good returns of all we lay out upon him and his; and that our wisest way both for ensuring and improving what we have, is to make ourselves creditors to his wanting saints.

A compassionate heart, and a helping hand will gather by expending; such giving is getting, such bounty is the most compendious way to plenty. Whereupon the wise man addeth, “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” (Prov. xi. 24.) Who is he here that scattereth? Not he that wastes his estate upon his throat, his back and his belly, or with the prodigal upon harlots; but he “that casteth his bread upon the waters,” as the expression is. (Eccl. xi. 1.) “He that disperseth and giveth to the poor.” (Ps. cxii. 9.) This is the scatterer in that text. And what of him? Is he wasted? Is he impoverished? Behold quite the contrary! the man is grown rich—he is increased by scattering. Let him look to it that withholdeth more than is meet: this is the more likely
man of the two to be found shortly on the dunghill. If thou wilt secure thyself from beggary, keep not God's beggars from thy door, nor send away empty those whose needs, though not their tongues, cry in thine ears, "Give for the Lord's sake." Fear not to lose by laying out. Thy laying up what thou shouldst lay out hath the most danger in it. The Divine curse may wither that in thine hand which thou holdest fast against the Divine command.

In the following verse we read further—"The liberal soul shall be made fat." The soul is often in Scripture taken to signify the man, and so it is here, and is the same as the liberal man. To be made fat signifies to prosper, to be full, and abound, or to grow rich in this world's goods; and thus it shall be, if this Scripture may be credited.

The liberal soul! It is in the Hebrew, the soul of blessing: the merciful man is a blessing, and hath a blessing for such as need him. And he that is a blessing shall be blessed; the Lord God shall bless him with an increase of his substance, who hath most emptied himself for him and his. It is true, that the soul of the liberal properly taken shall be a gainer by his liberality; no more thriving Christians, than the merciful Christians: what they expend in temporals is abundantly returned in spirituals. But because there is so much of carnal, even in too many Christians, and we have need of encouragements suited to our tempers, therefore to our spiritual advantages, which are the greatest—these outward encouragements are added, as often most taking with our too carnal hearts. So that this is the sense of the place. The liberal man, as the reward and encouragement of his liberality, shall prosper in the world. And as it follows, he that watereth the soul of the needy, his waters shall not fail, but he shall be
watered also himself. God will give in to him, according as he hath given out to others.

And for their further encouragement, saith the wise man, "He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, shall he pay him again." (Pro. xix. 17.) If that which thou givest be repaid thee again, how can it be said to be lost? Indeed the poor, unto whom thou givest, are not able to repay thee again, yet having such an all sufficient surety as God himself, who hath undertaken the repayment thou needest not doubt thereof. Oh happy is that man who becomes a creditor to his Creator, and makes God his debtor! whose is the earth and the fulness thereof? Heaven and earth shall be emptied before he shall want a royal payment.

Fear not to be a usurer, so thou lendest unto God, make him thy debtor, and he will surely pay thee principal and interest. Allow Him His time (for that He will have,) and He will not only pay the debt, but allow thee for the forbearance. The ungodly borroweth, and payeth not again; but this shall never be said of the righteous God: He is just, and will make good payment of whatsoever is lent unto him.

It is true, the Lord loves to deal upon trust, and uses to make payment by way of returns. He will be trusted, and those that will not give Him credit, let them, if they can, put their estates into surer hands. And He uses to pay by the way of returns, it may be neither in the same kind, nor in the same country. Sometimes it is so, that He pays not in the same kind, bread for bread, or clothes for clothes, or money for money. Nor possibly may He make his payment in this foreign land, where thou art a merchant-adventurer, but may give thee His bill of exchange to
receive it in thine own country, that better country which
is thy home and inheritance, which shall be the reward of
thy works and labour of love, which thou shewest to His
name. And if he do thus, does He do thee any wrong?
Is it not best for thee that thou receive thy goods at thy
home? Is it any harm for thee to receive silver for thy
brass, gold for thy silver, rubies for thy gold, a treasure in
heaven for thy treasure on earth? Doubt not that he will
be behindhand with thee, yet stick not if thou shouldst be
put to it to wait for payment in full till hereafter, and for
the present thou mayest depend upon this, "He that
giveth to the poor, shall not lack," (Prov. xxviii. 27.) he
shall have in hand what is needful at least. He shall not
lack, and there may be more in this word than if He had
said, "I will presently pay thee all: for all that thou hast,
if thou shouldst hold it ever so close, cannot secure thee from
ever coming to want; as great as thy abundance is, thou
mayest come to want before thou diest." But what thy
abundance cannot do, this promise of God can, and doth for
thee, even gives thee security that thou shalt never lack.

Again, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt
find it after many days." (Eccl. xi. 1.) By bread, is meant
all things necessary for the support of men's lives. And by
casting their bread upon the waters, is meant their giving
freely of that which they have for the relief of the poor,
whose watery eyes betray their great necessity. And
though that which thou bestowest on them, may seem to
be as clearly lost and cast away, as that which is thrown
down the river, or cast into the sea, where there is no
likelihood of receiving it again, because it is given to those
who can in no way recompense thee: whence arose that
Greek proverb: "Thou sowest upon the water," which is
usually applied to such as bestow kindnesses where they are utterly lost.

Yet thou shalt find it after many days. Lavater in locum says, that there is implied a promise of long life to the charitable, that God will lengthen out his days to a good old age. Though this falls out true in many, yet I conceive it is not intended here, nor to be the meaning of the words, but rather this, that though thy reward doth not appear directly, yet if thou bestowest thine alms with a sincere heart, it shall not be lost, but certainly be returned into thy bosom with an increase.

Yet further saith the Lord, by the prophet, If thou deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, and when thou seest the naked, if thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh, by turning thy face from him: Then (see what a gracious promise of signal blessings follows hereupon,) shall thy light break forth as the morning, that is, then shall the night of thy adversity be dispelled, and the day-spring of thy prosperity break forth as the morning light; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, that is, the fruit and reward of thy charity shall be visible to all; “the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward,” (Isa. lviii. 7, 8.) that is, the God of glory shall by his power and providence, both go before thee, and follow thee with his blessing; and, “If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul,” that is, afford that hearty relief unto him which shall satisfy his necessity, “then shall thy light rise in obscurity,” thy adversity shall be turned into prosperity: and “The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought,” (v. 10.) as thou didst satisfy the poor man’s by supplying his wants, so the Lord will
supply thee with a sufficiency in the greatest dearth and famine; ”and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not;” an emblem of a flourishing and prosperous estate, which doth usually follow and accompany merciful men.

Yea, our blessed Saviour promiseth, that such as shall, for his sake, in this, or in any other way, part with their estates, or any part or portion of them, shall receive an hundred fold here, and inherit eternal life hereafter; (Matt. xix. 29,) here in this life he shall have the return of an hundred fold, which many Christians have found true, in their own experience, and with thankfulness to God have acknowledged as much.

And what variety of expressions doth our Saviour use to assure us of a large reward here for all our labour and love shewn to His ministers and members? “Give,” saith he, “and it shall be given unto you again, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.” (Luke vi. 38.) For your encouragement unto this duty of giving to the poor, our Saviour has first annexed a general promise of return, give, and it shall be given unto you again, here he giveth you a bill of his hand, that you shall be no loser by what you give to His poor, but shall be repaid, and that with advantage, as the following words declare, You shall have good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over; we account it good measure when it is heaped up, but when it is not only heaped up, but pressed down, that is more; but when it is heaped up, pressed down, and then heaped up, and running over again, who can but say, that this is good measure indeed? Yet thus God deals with merciful men, they shall have mercies and blessings heaped up, pressed down, and running over. How
truly then may I take up the words of the Psalmist, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor;" he shall not only be blessed, but he shall have blessings heaped up, and running over; which the Apostle St. Paul expresseth very emphatically, by the similitude of reaping and sowing, "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly, but he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. ix. 6.) As men sow, so shall they reap, the more liberally they give to good uses, the more bountifully they shall receive from God: they shall find a plentiful harvest, as the fruit of all their costs and pains. Dr. Hammond in his "Practical Catechism," quoting these words of the Apostle, "He which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully," addeth this gloss, "By reaping bountifully," I conceive is meant, "not only God's abundant retributions of glory in another world, but even his payments of temporal plenty, and blessings here to those who have been willing to make that Christian use of that earthly talent committed to their stewarding."

Thus you see there are so many promises both in the Old and New Testament of temporal as well as of spiritual and eternal blessings to the merciful, that there can be no question made of the truth of the doctrine; and to use the expression of the aforementioned Doctor, By all those testimonies from the word of God, both in the New and Old Testament, I conceive this doctrine as clear as any in the Scripture: That the promise of temporal plenty to the liberal is so distinct and infallible, that it can be no less than,

1. A very gross ignorance of plain Scripture not to observe it; and,

2. An act of arrant infidelity not to believe it.

Though these proofs of Scripture are sufficient to convince
any Christian of the truth of the doctrine, yet for your further satisfaction, I shall briefly give you the judgment both of some ancient fathers, and modern divines concerning the same.

Clemens Alexand. Not he that possesseth wealth, and keeps it by him, but he that distributeth it, is rich; neither is it the having, but the laying out of riches, that makes men rich.

Isidorus. We lose all earthly things by keeping them, and by giving them away, we keep them.

St. Basil. It's the best way of thriving to give to them that are in want.

Aug. The field of the poor is very fruitful, and quickly yieldeth an increase to the charitable.

The same father in his Twenty-fifth sermon, de verbis Domini, brings in Christ speaking thus: "Give to me of that which I have given to thee; I have been thy benefactor, make me thy debtor, become an usurer unto me, and I will pay thee with advantage." And in one of his epistles, "Give a little, and thou shalt receive an hundredfold."

Pet. Raven. Give to the poor, and it shall be given to thee. Whatsoever thou givest to the poor, thou securest to thyself; what thou withholdest, another shall possess.

Cornelius a Lapide. "God twice pays what is lent to him, once in this world, by multiplying the wealth of alms-givers, and then in heaven he pays it over and over." Dr. Hammond, in his sermon on Deut. xxvi. 12, 13, layeth down this proposition, That almsgiving or mercifulness was never the wasting or lessening of any man's estate, to himself or his posterity, but rather the increasing of it. And thereupon addeth, if I have delivered a new doctrine,
WAY OF THRIVING.

which will not presently be believed, such as every auditor will not consent to, I doubt not but there are plain texts of Scripture, more than one, which will assure every Christian of the truth of it. Consider them at your leisure, Ps. xli. 1, 2; Ps. cxii., all to this purpose. Prov. xi. 25, and xxii. 9, and xix. 17, and xxviii. 27; add to these the words of Christ, Mark x. 30, which though more generally delivered of any kind of parting with possessions for Christ's sake, are applied by St. Hierom, to the words of Solomon, (Prov. xi. 24.) "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," quia centuplum accipiunt in hoc tempore, because, saith he, they receive an hundred-fold in this world. All these being put together, must, saith he, (to my understanding,) make it as clear to any that acknowledge these for Scripture, as if God should call to a man, out of heaven, by name, and bid him "relieve that poor man, and he should never be poorer for it," &c. Afterwards in pressing upon his auditors the duty of alms-giving: "This," saith he, "I am resolved on, it is want of belief, and nothing else, that keeps men from the practice of this duty. Could this one mountain be removed, the lessening of our wealth, that alms-giving is accused of, could that one scandal to flesh and blood be kicked out of the way, there is no other devil would take the unmerciful man's part, no other temptation molest the alms-giver."

And let me tell you, that you have no more evidence for the truth of Christ's coming, for all the fundamentals of your faith, on which you are content your salvation should depend, than such as I have given you for your security in this point.

Dr. Jeremy Taylor in his Rules of Holy Living, treating of alms, (sect. 8) among other motives thereunto, hath this,
"That portion of our estate out of which a tenth, or a fifth, a twentieth, or some offering to God for religion, and the poor goes forth, certainly returns with a great blessing upon all the rest. It is like the effusion of oil by the Sidonian woman, as long as she poured into empty vessels, it could never cease running: or like the widow's barrel of meal, it consumed not so long as she fed the prophet."

Mr. Hildersham, in his Twenty-second Lecture on Ps. 25, speaking of alms-giving, says, "It is a duty that God hath made greater promises unto, than to any other almost that a Christian can perform. And three sorts of promises there are that are made unto it. First, that it shall never hinder nor beggar a man, that which is thus given shall not be lost, yea it will return again with advantage and increase; yea, that which is thus given, will bring God's blessing upon all that we have besides." (Deut. xv. 10.)

Dr. Thomas Jacob, in his Sermon on Matt. v. 7, preached at the Spital, 1657, saith, "God will return to the merciful man what he gives to the poor, he will reward him in kind, that look, whatever he bestows, it shall be in the very kind made up to him again, many have found this to be true; in the morning they have given, may be, five shillings, and before night, God hath brought them in unexpectedly twenty for them. The best way for a man to increase his estate is charity; money here is like the widow's oil, the more it is poured out, the more it doth increase," &c. And p. 26, "No man shall be the poorer at the year's end, for what he lays out upon the poor, you shall have your money again, and improvement for it too."

The author of the Whole Duty of Man, treating of alms in partition 17, saith, "There is but one objection to be made
against a cheerful giver of alms, and that is, the danger of impoverishing one's self by what one gives." To which he answers in these words, "That this is sure a vain supposition, God having particularly promised the contrary to the charitable, that it shall bring blessings on them, even in these outward things, 'the liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself,' (Prov. xi. 25.) 'He that giveth to the poor, shall not lack.' (Prov. xxviii. 27.) And many the like texts there are, so that one may truly say, this objection is grounded in direct unbelief. The short of it is, we dare not trust God, for this giving to the poor, is directly the putting our wealth into his hands: 'He that giveth to the poor, lendeth unto the Lord,' (Prov. xix. 17,) and that too on solemn promise of repayment, as it follows in that verse, 'That which he hath given will he pay him again.' It is amongst men thought a great disparagement, when we refuse to trust them, it shews we either think them not sufficient or not honest. How vile an affront is it then to God thus to distrust Him. Nay indeed, what horrid blasphemy, to doubt the security of that for which he thus expressly passed his word, who is the Lord of all, and therefore cannot be insufficient. And who is the God of truth, and therefore will not fail to make good his promise? Let not then that infidel fear of future want, contract and shut up thy bowels from thy poor brother; for though he is never likely to pay, yet God becomes his surety, and enters bond with him, and will most assuredly pay thee with increase."

"Therefore it is so far from being damage to thee thus to give, that it is thy great advantage. Any man would rather choose to put his money in some sure hand, where he may both improve, and be certain of it at his need, than to
let it lie unprofitably by him, especially if he be in danger of thieves, or other accidents, by which he may probably lose it. Now, alas! all that we possess is in imminent danger of losing: innumerable accidents there are, which may in an instant bring a rich man to beggary; he that doubts this, let him but read the story of Job, and he will there find an example of it. And therefore what so prudent course can we take for our wealth, as to put it out of the reach of those accidents, by thus lending it to God, where we may be sure to find it ready at our greatest need, and that, too, with improvement and increase? in which respect it is, that the Apostle compares alms to seed. (2 Cor. ix. 10.) We know it is the nature of seed that is sown, to multiply and increase; and so do all our acts of mercy—they return not single and naked to us, but bring in their sheaves with them, a most plenteous and bountiful harvest. God deals not with our alms, as we too often do with his graces, wrap them up in a napkin, so that they shall never bring in any advantage to us, but makes us most rich returns. And therefore we have all reason, most cheerfully—yea, joyfully—to set to this duty, which we have such invitations to, as well in respect of our own interest, as our neighbour’s needs.”

Thus have you the truth of the point proved, both by Divine and human testimonies. I shall now proceed to give you some instances for the further confirmation thereof. But I must beseech you, first, to take these two cautions—

1. Not to ascribe the reward to any merit of your good works, but only to the free grace, and rich mercy of God.—It is his rich mercy, that we have wherewithal to give,—and his free grace, that we have an heart to give,—and his abundant goodness, that he accepteth our works of
WAY OF THRIVING.

25

charity, and rewardeth them with all sorts of blessings, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal; but we cannot merit anything at his hands by giving him that which is his own.

2. Though our alms-deeds are sacrifices acceptable and well-pleasing unto God through Christ; and though he hath bound himself by many gracious promises to reward the same both here and hereafter; yet, far be it from us to perform them merely out of hope of reward, but rather for conscience' sake, in obedience to the command of God, (who hath required them at our hands,) and in testimony of our thankfulness unto him, for what he hath graciously bestowed upon us. As we are commanded to obey the magistrate, not so much for fear of punishment, and hope of reward, as for conscience' sake, in obedience to the command of God. (Rom. xiii. 5.) So ought we to distribute our alms, not so much for the reward's sake, as out of conscience for the Lord's sake.

I deny not but that Christians in their well-doing may, for their encouragement, have respect to the recompense of reward, but not *only* and *chiefly*. The chief and principal ends we should aim at in all our good works are—the glory of God, and obedience to his command. Our respect to the recompense of reward ought to be subordinate unto these. The truth is, this temporal reward should not so much be looked on as an argument to persuade us to give, but as an answer of an objection against giving. Thou wilt be ready to say, I may want it myself, or mine may want it. But do but believe that God will repay thee, and with overplus, and then that doubt will be taken out of the way.

These two cautions premised, I shall proceed in the
confirmation of the point from the examples of many charitable persons, who have in temporal mercies been abundantly recompensed for the kindness they have shewed to the ministers and members of Christ.

The widow of Sarepta nourished the prophet Elijah in her house during the whole time of famine; and how did the Lord abundantly recompense this her charity? by his miraculously preserving and increasing her meal and oil, whereby her family was nourished; and also by restoring her son to life again, after his soul was departed (1 Kings xvii. 22); and by causing the prophet to continue with her many months, to feed her soul with spiritual, as she had his body with carnal food.

How abundantly was the Shunammite's kindness to the prophet Elisha recompensed?

1. By the gift of a son after long barrenness.
2. By restoring her son to life again, when he was dead. (2 Kings iv. 35.)
3. By the forewarning her of a famine approaching. (2 Kings viii. 1, 4.)
4. By the restoring of her house and land, lost in her long absence, by reason of the famine. (2 Kings iv. 5, 6.)

Notable is the instance of Job: what a merciful man he was, we may read, (chap. xxix. 12, 13, 15.) "I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame, I was a father to the poor."

And, (chap. xxxi. 16, 22,) "If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath
not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.” I have transcribed his own words thus at large, that I might set this worthy pattern before the reader’s eyes.

But you will say, What became of this merciful man? Did he prosper? Did he flourish and grow great? Who so poor as poor Job, after all these acts of mercy? How long after was it that we find this merciful man a miserable man, stripped naked of all that he ever had? But, first, It was not his own mercy, but Satan’s malice that brought him down: it was the devil that set the Sabeans and Chaldeans upon him, to plunder and carry away all that he had. And, secondly, what became of Job afterwards, after Satan had done his worst? You may read, (chap. xlii. 10, &c.) that the Lord turned the captivity of Job, and gave him twice as much as he had before, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels—a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses; he had, also, seven sons and three daughters. We read (Acts xxviii. 7) how Publius, the chief man of the island of Melita, into which St. Paul, and many others with him, were cast by shipwreck, received and lodged them three days courteously. And in the next verse we read, how the father of Publius, when he lay desperately sick of a fever and bloody-flux, was recovered by St. Paul, and restored to his former health. So, likewise, the kindness which the barbarous people of that island shewed unto St. Paul and his fellow-travellers, was recompensed with the cure of many of their sick bodies.
To these examples, recorded in Scripture, I shall add a few more out of ancient and modern writings.

St. Alban (whom Mr. Fox, in his first tome, mentioned amongst the martyrs who suffered for the name and cause of Christ) having received a poor persecuted minister into his house, was, by his godly life and gracious exhortations, so wrought upon, that he turned from heathenism to Christianity, and at last suffered as a martyr for the truth of Jesus Christ, as Beda, and others write of him. His kindness to a poor persecuted minister was recompensed not only with his conversion to the true religion, but likewise with the honour of martyrdom.

St. Austin, having set forth the mercifulness and liberality of Constantine the Great, says, "God gave Constantine, that merciful prince, more wealth than heart could wish, for his bounty to the poor."

Dr. Hammond, in his before mentioned Treatise, mentions an ancient story out of "Cedrenus," of a Jew, who, upon reading those words of Solomon, (Prov. xix. 17.) "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again," resolved to try whether God would be as good as his word: thereupon, he gave all that he had, excepting two pieces of silver, to the poor, and then waited and expected to see it come again. But being not presently answered in that expectation, grew angry, and went up to Jerusalem to expostulate with God for not performing his promise. And going on his way, found two men striving—engaged in an unreasonable quarrel about a stone, which, both walking together, they had found in the way, and so both had equal right to it; but (being but one, and not capable of being divided) they could not both enjoy it; and therefore,
to make them friends, he having two pieces of silver, contracts to divide them between the contenders, he having the stone in exchange for them. Having it, he continued his journey, and on coming to Jerusalem, shewed it to a goldsmith, who told him that it was a jewel of great value, having fallen, and was lost, out of the high-priest’s ephod, to whom, if he carried it, he would certainly receive a great reward. He did so, and it proved accordingly. The high-priest took it from him, gave him a great reward, and withheld sharply reproved him for questioning the truth of God’s promises, bidding him trust God the next time.

The story of Tiberius the Second is pertinent to this purpose, which take in the words of that reverend person before mentioned, in his sermon at the Spital. This Tiberius was very famous for his bounty to the poor, inasmuch, that his wife was wont to blame him for it, and speaking to him once, as to why he wasted his treasure that way, he told her, “He should never want money, so long as, in obedience to Christ’s command, he supplied the necessities of the poor.” And presently, see how Providence ordered it! Immediately after he had given much this way, under a marble table which was taken up he found a great treasure; and news was brought him, too, of the death of one Narses, a very rich man, who had given his whole estate unto him.

Famous is the story of the charitable Bishop of Milan, who, as he was travelling with his servant, overtook some poor people who begged alms of him; whereupon, he asked his man what money he had about him, who answered, “Three crowns,” which he commanded him to give unto them; but the servant thinking himself wiser than his master, gave them but two crowns, not knowing what occasion they
might have for money before they got home. Not long after, some nobleman meeting the bishop, and knowing him to be a very charitable man, appointed two hundred crowns to be paid to the bishop's servant for his master's use. The servant having received the money, presently, with great joy, acquainted his master therewith, whereupon the bishop said, "Thou mayest now see how, in wronging the poor of their due, by keeping back the third crown which I intended for them, thou hast likewise wronged me. If thou hadst given those three crowns, as I commanded thee to give, thou hadst received three hundred crowns, whereas now I have but two.

It is recorded of Mary, the wife of Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, that being childless she conceived a hope, that if she should take into her house some orphan, or poor man's child, and there train him up, God would bestow a son upon her. Whereupon she took a poor man's son into her care, and gave orders for his education, and, according to her expectation, at nine months' end she was delivered of a son.

Suitable, likewise, to this point, is the story of one, John Stewart, provost of Ayr, in Scotland, who was eminent for piety and charity. He had a considerable estate left him by his father; of which he gave a great part to the poor, and for other charitable uses. To pass by many, I shall mention only one. His heart, at a certain time, being much affected with the wants and necessities of many of God's people, who were in a suffering condition, he sendeth to Edinburgh for divers of them, where, being met, and some time spent in prayer, he made them promise not to reveal what he was about to do as long as he lived; and then told them he was not ignorant in what a low condition
many of them were, and therefore he had brought some money with him to lend each of them but that they should never offer to repay it till he required the same. Soon after this, such a plague broke forth in Ayr, the place of his abode, that trade much decayed, and he himself, with others, was very much reduced. Whereupon, some of the profane in that place derided him, saying, that religion had made him poor, and his giving so much to others, like a fool, had brought him to want. But mark what followed. Having borrowed a little money, he departs from Ayr to Rochelle, in France, where salt and other commodities being exceedingly cheap for want of trading, he ventured to freight a ship, and loaded her upon credit; and then went back again through England to Ayr, in Scotland, having ordered the ship to come thither. But after long expectation he was informed for certain, that his ship was taken by a Turkish man-of-war, the report of which exceedingly afflicted him, not because he knew not how to be abased, as well as how to abound, but out of fear that the mouths of wicked men would be the more opened to the reproaching of his profession and charity. But soon after, tidings were brought him that his ship had safely arrived in the road, and upon his going forth, he saw it was a truth. And through God’s good providence, as a reward for his charity, he made so much of the commodities in the ship, that after the payment of his debts he had twenty thousand marks left for himself. Though his bread was cast upon the waters, and to all appearance lost, yet after many days it returned to him with great advantage. This story I lately read in a book called “The Fulsilling of the Scriptures.”

Daniel Waldow, Esq., citizen and mercer, who was chosen alderman of London, is a further proof of the doc-
trine before laid down; I could, from mine own experience, speak much of his bounty and charity; as also of that plentiful estate wherewith God blessed him thereupon. But I shall rather give it you in the words of that holy man and blessed servant of Christ in the work of the ministry, Mr. James Nalton, now with God, who was more intimately acquainted with Mr. Waldow, and therefore the more fit to preach his funeral sermon, and to set forth his life for our imitation. His words are these, He was a man eminent and exemplary in the grace of charity, as appeared by his great bounty manifested on every occasion. Never any good man, minister or other, came to propound any work of charity, public or private, that needed to do any more than to propound it, for his heart was so set upon works of mercy, that he prevented importunity by his christian and heroic liberality; he made no more of giving ten pounds to a work of charity than many other rich men make of giving ten shillings. His charity had two singular concomitants, which made it the more remarkable and praise-worthy.

1. He did good while he lived: he carried his lantern before him: he made his own hands his executors, and his own eyes his overseers. Some will part with their riches when they can keep them no longer; this is like a cut-purse, who being espied or pursued, will drop a purse of gold, because he can keep it no longer. But to be doing good in our life-time, while we have opportunity, this is an act of faith, and an evidence that we can trust God with our estate, and our children, that he will provide for them when our heads are laid in the grave.

2. He dispensed his charity so secretly, without any self-seeking, or Pharisaical vain-glory, that his left hand
did not know what his right hand did. Therefore did he often go, with an hundred pounds under his cloak, to some godly friends, desiring them to distribute it among such honest poor people as stood in most need of relief.

In brief, he did so much good while he lived, as if he meant to have nothing to do when he died; and yet he gave so largely when he came to die, as if he had done no good when he lived.

Many, I know, are apt to say, they have many children, and therefore cannot give. So had Mr. Waldow, he had nine children alive at his death, but the providing for them was no obstruction to his charity, nor was his charity any prejudice to his children, but did rather entail a blessing upon them.

Mr. John Walter, Citizen and Draper, of London, was signally charitable, not only at his death, but in the whole course of his life, even from his younger years. For the avoiding of vain-glory, his manner was to send considerable sums of money to several poor families, by the hands of others, in whose faithfulness he could confide. Whereupon God did not only bless him with a large estate, but likewise gave him such contentedness therein, that he sat down abundantly satisfied, and made a solemn vow and promise unto God that he would give the surplus of his estate, whatever it was, that for the future should accrue unto him from his calling and employments to charitable uses. That you may be assured of the truth thereof, I have here given you his own expressions, transcribed out of his last will and testament, which are as follows:

"I thought fit to declare that about twenty years past, when the Lord had entrusted me with a convenient estate, sufficient to maintain my charge, and afford fit portions for my wife and children, after my decease; I resolved that
what further estate the Lord should be pleased to entrust me with, to bestow the same on charitable uses."

After this vow, finding his estate wonderfully increased, he began to build alms-houses, one in the Parish of St. George's Southwark, another in St. Mary's, Newington; because in those parishes he observed there were many blind, lame, distressed, poor people, and never an alms-house in them. He likewise built a chapel near one of the alms-houses, for the poor people to serve God in daily. Having built his alms-houses with the poor's stock, he bought lands and houses of inheritance, which he settled upon the Company of Drapers, for the relief and support of his alms-people, after his decease, and for the performing other charitable gifts mentioned in his last will and testament. While he lived, he was wont to go himself once a month to his alms-houses in his worst clothes (that he might not be suspected to be the founder of them,) and gave unto the poor people their promised allowance. Doubtless, that is the best charity, which, Nilus-like, hath the several streams thereof seen, but the fountain concealed, Having built his alms-houses, endowed them with a good revenue; then with the remainder of the poor's stock, (which daily increased, with God's blessing upon his pains and endeavours in his calling,) he relieved poor people and families with considerable sums of money, and gave much bread weekly to the poor of several out-parishes. All this he did whilst yet living, besides what he gave upon the like account at his death; which was also very considerable, as further appears by his will. Notwithstanding all which, he gave and left to his wife and his two daughters about ten thousand pounds. This, questionless, is the surest way to have our WILLS performed, to see them performed in our life-time,
in regard that many executors prove executioners of wills.

William Pennoyer, Esq., Citizen and Merchant of London, a person wholly composed of mercy and goodness, bounty and liberality, which he expressed in the whole course of his life, even from his first setting up in the world. Many years before his death, he turned a great part of the stock wherewith he traded, into lands of inheritance, to the value of four hundred pounds per annum; and being eminently charitable, he lived as frugally as he could, spending about two hundred pounds a year upon himself, wife, and family, and the remaining part of his income he wholly bestowed on charitable uses, as I have been informed by those who lived long with him, and were nearly related to him.

To give you a clear demonstration of his christian charity, and of God's recompensing the same unto him here in this life, with temporal blessings, I shall recite some of his legacies, bequeathed in his last will and testament, to charitable uses, passing by such as he gave to his rich kindred and acquaintance.

To poor ministers, widows, and others in distress, about £150.

To four of his poor tenants, £20.

Likewise £800 to be laid out here in woollen cloth, or other commodities, to be sent to New England, for the use of his poor kindred there.

He gave to certain trustees, lands to the value of £20 per annum, to pay for the teaching of forty boys at school.

To Bristol £54 per annum towards the maintenance of a schoolmaster and lecturer, to preach a week-day lecture there, and to other charitable uses.
He likewise settled £20 per annum on trustees, for the teaching of forty poor children in or near Whitechapel; and 40s. yearly to buy Bibles for some of the children.

He gave £12 per annum for the maintaining a school at the Hay, in Brecknockshire: and 40s. more yearly to buy books for the scholars.

As also £10 per annum for the maintenance of poor distressed people in the hospital of Bethlehem, in London. And £10 per annum to ten of the blindest, oldest, and poorest Cloth-workers, at the discretion of the master, wardens, and assistants of the said company, for the time being.

He gave £40 per annum to Christ-church hospital, for the placing out four children yearly: and 40s. more yearly to buy each of the children a Bible.

Besides these, he gave to his poor kindred above two thousand pounds by his will.

And by a codicil annexed thereunto, he bequeathed to certain trustees a thousand pounds, to be given to honest poor people; as also £300 for releasing poor prisoners; which sums have been paid into the hands of the trustees, by Mr. Richard Loton, and Michael Davison, Esq., who to their honour have approved themselves faithful executors to this charitable will.

Thomas Arnold, Citizen and Haberdasher of London. At his first setting up for himself, his stock was not great, but being charitably disposed, and ready to every good work, his estate, through God's blessing, very much increased.

His charity in his life-time appeared not only by his forwardness to communicate to the relief of such as he saw in want; but likewise his frequent enquiring of others,
after such poor people as were overburdened with children, or otherwise distressed. Yea, he hired men with money to make it their business to find out honest poor people, on whom he might bestow his charity; and likewise did entrust others with considerable sums of money, to distribute among the poorest sort, charging them to have special respect to the honest poor, such whom they conceived did truly fear God. That he was no loser, but a gainer by his liberality, appeareth in that God so blessed him in his calling, that he attained to an alderman's estate, and was chosen to that office. Yea, he gave over his calling in the city, and withdrew himself into the country, that he might the better mind God, and the concerns of his soul more, and the world with its concerns less.

John Clark, Doctor of Physic, one of great repute for his learning, piety, and charity, some time President of the College of Physicians. His custom was, to lay by all his Lord's-day fees, as a sacred stock for charitable uses, devoting that entirely to God, which he received on His day, accounting it a piece of sacrilege to appropriate it to himself, or any common use; whereupon the Lord was pleased so to prosper him in his calling, that though at first his practice was little, and his estate not very great, yet afterwards his practice so increased, and the world so flowed upon him, that he lived plentifully and comfortably, and gave to his children liberal portions.

The like was practised by John Bathrust, Doctor of Physic, with whom I was very well acquainted. His Lord's-day fees were constantly kept as a bank for the poor, and wholly devoted to, and employed for their use; which was so far from lessening his income, that by the blessing of God upon his practice, it was, in a few
years, greatly augmented by it; for though at his first coming to London, he brought little estate with him, and here had small acquaintance, Yorkshire being his native county, where he had spent his former days, yet the Lord was pleased so to prosper him in his calling, that in twenty years’ time, he purchased lands of inheritance, to the value of a thousand pounds per annum, to speak what I know to be certain, for in the repute of some, his estate at his death was no less than two thousand pounds of yearly value.

Dr. Edmond Trench likewise observed the same course, as his wife and divers other friends of his testify. And certain it is, that this was no damage, but a great advantage to him, for he had as many patients as his weak body would permit him to visit. And, though he lived at a full and plentiful rate, frequently and cheerfully entertaining ministers and scholars at his table: yet did he gain a very considerable estate, which he left to his wife and children, in whom not only his memory, but his piety still survives.

I have good ground to believe, that many other physicians make a conscience of this duty, but oh that all would do the like! certainly they would be no losers thereby, at the year’s end, but find God’s blessing upon their calling and estates, prospering them in both.

And here occurs to me a case of conscience worthy to be inquired into, viz., Whether Physicians may lawfully appropriate unto their own private use their Lord’s-day fees? I mean those fees which they receive from their patients on the Sabbath-day.

I deny not but works of mercy may, and ought to be done on that day, for, saith the Lord, “I will have mercy,
and not sacrifice:” (Matt. ix. 13.) that is, mercy rather than sacrifice. And deny not, but of the richer sort especially, they may receive their fees for their pains. But I much question whether they may appropriate those fees to themselves. In regard the Lord hath afforded us six days out of seven, wherein we may and ought to follow our callings, for our own livelihood, and of those who belong unto us, but hath sanctified and set apart the Christian Sabbath for his own honour and service; and therefore it seemeth but reasonable that what accrues unto us on that day, should be set apart and employed for his more immediate use and service. But I will not impose this as a necessary duty, at least upon all, in regard that circumstances may vary, but leave it at present to the determination of their own consciences, who are most concerned therein.

Samuel Dunche, Esq., of Pusey, in the County of Berks, a person, that according to the Apostle's rule, did good to all, but especially to those of the household of faith. His custom was to send monies yearly to several towns, as to Stow upon the Wold, in Gloucestershire, to Northleach, to Lambourn, and others not here mentioned, for the relief of their poor. And upon the last here named, he settled lands of inheritance for ever, for the same use. And to Romsey, in Hampshire, he gave by deed upon the like account, a lease of ninety-nine years, to commence after his decease. The poor also of the said town, whom he called his alms-people, had, during his life, weekly relief from him, and many other towns together with them, were large sharers in the like bounty.

Several poor children of the said town, and likewise of those belonging to Farringdon he sent to school, and did not only pay for their teaching, but also furnished them with
all such books as were fit and convenient for them. He also caused several good books to be printed at his own cost, which he freely gave to the poor, that they might the better be encouraged to read, and to acquaint themselves with the concerns of another and better life.

He further gave considerable sums of money yearly for the constant supply of such godly ministers as he knew to be in want; and upon several of them he settled considerable annuities, £10 and £20 per annum for their lives, besides such legacies, which were not small, as he gave to some of them at his death.

Besides all this, his hand was ever open and ready to distribute whenever any fit occasion was offered to him; yea, such was the enlargement of his heart, and tenderness of his bowels, that he could hardly pass by any whom he judged due objects of his charity, but he freely and bountifully contributed to their relief.

Thus did this pious gentleman honour God with his substance, and adventure upon the royal prophet's words, "to cast his bread upon the waters," which though the unbelieving world accounts but folly, and usually reckon it amongst their losses, yet he, to his advantage, according to the promise thereto annexed, "found it again not after many days." This bread, like the loaves with which Christ fed the multitude, was multiplied in his hand, and his oil increased by pouring out. He was but a younger brother, and the estate settled upon him was but £800 per annum, or thereabouts; and yet, notwithstanding, I had almost said, this excess of charity, his estate was so far from being ruined, or in the least impaired, that not only the same bare measure he received, but much greater, pressed down, and running over, was meted out to him and his posterity.
So signally did God in his life reward his charity, wisely ordering by His good providence, that one way or other large handfuls, as over-measure, were from several hands thrown into his bushel. There is now left to his heirs an estate of more than double the value of what he received from his father, besides the portions which he gave to all his daughters, five in number, which were very considerable, to some of them more than £2000.

And here, I hope I may without offence or vain glory, take liberty to mention, amongst others, the charity and liberality of my dear and honoured father, Dr. William Gouge, late pastor of Blackfriars, London, who was eminent amongst other graces, in that of charity. From him I first heard, that the tenth part of a rich man's estate was a fit proportion to be devoted and dedicated to God for charitable uses. But though he recommended that to others, yet, by what I find in some papers written with his own hand, I may truly say, he gave the seventh part of all his yearly comings in, towards maintaining poor scholars at the university, and relieving poor families and distressed persons. And how wonderfully God blessed both his ministry, and his outward estate, is so well known to all who lived in his days, that I suppose it needless for me to say anything thereof; only I may truly apply unto him the words of the Psalmist, He was ever merciful and lending, and his seed is blessed.

Many more instances of the like nature might here be added; some, of persons who are now with joy reaping in the other world the blessed fruit of that seed which they had so plentifully sown in this; others, of persons yet living amongst us, some of whom have acknowledged to me, that God hath already rewarded them an hundred-fold for what they have lent to him, by giving to his poor. But those
already mentioned may be abundantly sufficient to evidence the truth in hand, and to encourage and provoke us in imitation of those worthies, to a more ready and conscientious practice of this great duty, so essential to Christianity, so well-pleasing to God, so creditable to our profession, so beneficial, not only in order to our eternal happiness, but our present gain, comfort, and prosperity here on earth.

The point being thus proved by Scripture and examples, we now come to the reasons for the further confirmation thereof.

The First Reason—may be taken from the goodness and bounty of God, which is such, that he will not suffer any work of charity shewed to any of his ministers or children, to pass away unrewarded, without a full recompense. Whereupon, saith David, (Ps. lxii. 12.) "Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work." Though God doth not render a reward to any man for his work done, yet doth he render to every man according to his work. Yea, God doth always exceed in his remunerations, to give evidence of his grace and bounty. God will not be in any man's debt long, but what he hath disbursed upon his account, he will speedily return into his bosom with advantage.

The Second Reason—may be taken from the faithfulness and righteousness of God, who, having in his word graciously promised, abundantly to recompense and reward our beneficence, his faithfulness and righteousness engageth him to make good what he hath promised; so that he cannot but be as good as his word. Men may be forward in promising, and slow in performing; but with God, who is the true and faithful one, saying and doing are both alike.
"All his promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus," saith the Apostle. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Heb. vi. 10.) Here the Apostle argueth a certainty of reward to those who minister anything to the saints from the righteousness of God, even because he is righteous, and therefore will not fail to do what he hath promised. He is not unrighteous to forget, that is, he will righteously remember,—and God's remembering, signifies the same as recompensing. As he will remember sinners by recompensing their evil ways upon their own heads, so he will remember his saints by returning the good that they have done into their own bosoms.

The more to assure us of such kind of remembrance from God, the Holy Ghost mentioneth certain books or rolls of remembrance written before God, wherein the merciful deeds of his servants are recorded. So that it is no more possible that such as are charitably given and helpful to the poor ministers and people of God should lose their reward, than that God himself should cease to be righteous, or be forgetful of his word.

The Third Reason—may be taken from several metaphorical expressions used in Scripture, by which almsgiving is represented to us; all which imply not only a certain return, but that with increase, as sowing and lending, and that upon usury.

1. We find it set forth in Scripture by sowing, (2 Cor. ix. 6.) "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." This proverbial speech the Apostle applieth to the dispersing of alms. Now, as husbandmen, who sow their corn with
a liberal hand, do usually reap a crop answerable thereunto, in like manner, such Christians as shall plentifully sow their seed of charity with an open hand, shall reap accordingly a plentiful crop,—they shall find their seed sown come up with increase, yielding thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold here, besides eternal life hereafter. It may be, thou mayest not presently reap the fruit of thy seed, and what wonder? Who is there that sows, who expects to reap the same day? The husbandman waiteth for his harvest; wait thou on the Lord, and doubt not but a harvest will come, that will pay thee both for thy sowing and thy waiting.

2. The second metaphor, whereby alms-giving is set forth in Scripture, is lending, and that upon usury, (Prov. xix. 17.) "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again." Men that lend to men receive their own with increase: what they lay up lies dead, and possibly the thief may break in and steal it away; but what they lend, if to sure hands, comes in with advantage. How rich do some usurers grow by this trade of lending? And though it be a paradox that giving is a richer trade than lending, even upon usury, yet it is a certain truth, for this giving is lending. And he that lends to the Lord will find a greater income at the year's end than he that lends to the best of men. Therefore, as one well saith, "Giving to the poor is not the way to waste our wealth, but the art of thriving, and the most compendious course to attain unto riches." Though our alms-deeds seem (as the seed sown) to perish and rot; yet believing what we see not, we shall assuredly see what we believe, and find (even here) such a fruitful increase, as we shall conclude, that giving to charitable uses
WAY OF THRIVING.

is the surest and safest way of getting and thriving in the world.

Thus have you the truth of the point confirmed by Scriptures, example, and reason. We now come to the application.

By way of reproof to all unmerciful men; who, notwithstanding the many charges God hath laid upon us, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willingly to communicate, to draw forth our souls to the hungry, to open our bowels to the needy, and the manifold encouragements he hath given us in his word thereto, yet do shut up their bowels of compassion from them, refusing to afford them any succour or relief. Surely such have no love to Christ. For who can say, he loves the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity, when he suffers his ministers and members to want necessaries, even food and raiment? Is this thy love to Christ, to suffer him to starve? It is evident thou Lovest thy money more than Christ, and so comest under that fearful anathema, (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.” These two words, though both denoting a curse, are of two several languages. The former word, Anathema, is a Greek word, signifying “accursed;” so it is used, (Rom. ix. 3; Gal. i. 8.) The latter is a Syriac word, as Beza observeth in his annotation on 1 Cor. xvi. 22; and is frequently used by the Jews; it signifies “our Lord cometh.” Maran is “our Lord,” and atha “cometh;” intimating that such as were under this curse were to expect no mercy, but to look for the dreadful coming of Christ to take vengeance upon them. So that, as St. James speaketh, (chap. ii. 13.) “He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.” How do they think to find
mercy from Christ, who never shewed mercy to him or his?

I will not condemn all for unmercifulness, (God forbid I should,) many there are (and I would to God there were more) who do contribute bountifully to the necessities both of ministers and other poor saints of God. But yet I have too great cause to say, that the greatest part of rich men amongst us have their hearts hardened and their bowels shut up, that they cannot compassionatetheir wants; and their hands withered, like his in the Gospel, that they cannot reach them out to any good use.

Oh, that such would consider, that unmercifulness is a greater sin than they do imagine. It was one of Sodom's sins which fetched down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them and all their children. (Ezek. xvi. 49.) Uncharitable men are cursed as in their life, so at their death. But most cursed will they be at the day of judgment. Being barren, fruitless trees in God's orchard, they shall, with the barren fig-tree, be surely cut down, and cast into unquenchable fire.

More particularly to shew you the miseries of uncharitable persons—

1. They are accursed here in everything: all they have is cursed. So much is implied in that expression of our Saviour, (Luke xi. 41.) "Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you;" but without alms-giving nothing is clean unto you, that is—nothing is blessed and sanctified unto you, but all things are defiled and cursed. Not only your crosses are curses, but your blessings are curses unto you. So God threateneth, to curse their very blessings. (Mal. ii. 2.) Though thou enjoyest abundance of this world's goods, yet so long as
thou art hard-hearted to the poor and needy, the curse of God cleaves to thy store and abundance. Oh, how sad and lamentable must thy condition needs be, when those things which are not only blessings in themselves, but likewise blessed unto others, should be cursed unto thee! surely, to be thus accursed is misery enough.

2. As the unmerciful are cursed here, so shall they be cursed hereafter. "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy." (James ii. 13.) Such as have shut up their bowels of compassion against the necessities of the poor, God will shut up his bowels of compassion against them, and let forth his fury upon them; they shall have their portion in his plagues and indignation, without the least drop of pity or mercy. And at the day of judgment, Christ will say unto them, (Matt. xxv. 41.) "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." There's their doom, and why? "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink." Oh, dreadful sentence! every word thereof carrieth much terror in it, and breatheth nothing but fire and brimstone. What! must they depart from Christ, the fountain of bliss and happiness? and into everlasting fire? Ah, wretches! cursed, indeed. For, as the prophet speaketh, (Isa. xxxiii. 14.) Who can dwell with devouring fires? who can dwell with everlasting burnings? An everlasting fever, or but an everlasting tooth-ache, were a misery unspeakable. But what are these to the lying in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone to all eternity? Oh, methinks the name of everlasting fire, and everlasting burnings should awaken all uncharitable men out of their security, and stir them up without any further delay to bewail their former unmerci-
fulness, to beg the pardon thereof, and unfeignedly to resolve, willingly to give out of their store towards the relief of the poor, proportionally to what God hath graciously bestowed on them. It may be, thou hast a plentiful portion of this world's goods; but oh! what will it profit thee to live plentifully here, and to be eternally miserable hereafter? Seriously, I cannot but stand amazed to consider how men, who do believe the words of Christ to be true, that all uncharitable men shall by him at the last day be sentenced into everlasting burning for their not feeding the hungry, nor clothing the naked; yet can be so hard-hearted as not to hearken to the cry of the poor.

3. The misery of uncharitable persons appeareth in this, that the wants and necessities of the poor cry loud to heaven against them. God hath dealt bountifully with thee, loading thee with his benefits, as the Psalmist speaketh, (Ps. lxviii. 19.) and hath given thee not only food and raiment, things needful and necessary, but an abundance, an affluency of outward things, even all things richly to enjoy: but how many of Christ’s ministers and members are in great want, not having wherewithal to satisfy their own and their children’s hunger? whose miseries, like the blood of Abel, cry unto God for vengeance against thee, saying, “Lord, there are not a few, who have enough and to spare, a liberal portion of this world’s goods, with Dives they fare sumptuously every day. But what are we, thy wanting servants, the better for them? Who of us are warmed with their fires, or clothed with their raiment, or so much as partake of the crumbs of their table? We are ready to perish for want, when they are surfeited with their abundance. Is the blessing of those who are ready to perish like to come upon them? Wilt not thou judge them, O Lord?” Cer-
tainly, these bitter and lamentable complaints cry aloud in
the ears of the Almighty, against such unchristian and
inhuman misers. Beware of the cry of the poor against
you. If thou wilt not hear their cries unto thee, God will
hear their cries against thee.

4. Thy unmercifulness to the poor will provoke God to
reject thy most religious exercises. "Whoso stoppeth his
ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but
shall not be heard." (Prov. xxi. 13.) In which words
Solomon hinteth to us two things.

1. That unmerciful men, such as turn away their ears
from the cry of the poor, shall fall into such miseries as
will bring them to their knees, and make them cry sooner
or later. Here in this world, worldly men sometimes
make many prayers, and their religion they hope will
make amends for their inhumanity at least. And in the
world to come, they shall follow their fellow Dives in his
infernal devotion.

2. Though they cry, yet they shall not be heard.
Whether they cry here upon their death-beds for mercy,
or hereafter in hell for ease, they shall not be heard. A
notable instance thereof we have in Dives, who, though he
cried not here, yet he cried in hell, saying, "Father
Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he
may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue;
for I am tormented in this flame." (Luke xvi. 24.) But
was he heard? Was his request granted? It was but a
small request, but yet it is denied. Because he denied
crumbs of bread here in his life to the poor, he was denied
a drop of water in hell.

And as thy prayers are rejected by God, so likewise will
it be in vain for thee to hear the word, or come to the table
of the Lord. All thy religion will be in vain shall I say? nay, it will be an abomination to the Lord, while that accursed thing, thy covetous and cruel heart, which the Lord abhorreth, (Ps. x. 3.) remains within thee. Think not that one duty will excuse the neglect of another,—that thy praying may serve instead of thine alms,—that such religion shall excuse the want of mercy, or that the confession of thy unmercifulness will make up the matter. The Lord abhorreth thee and all thy sacrifices, whilst the sacrifice of a compassionate heart is wanting.

Oh, that all uncharitable persons would keep their thoughts in a serious meditation of these things! and as they desire to prevent those judgments which accompany all merciless men, they would put in for a share in the mercies of the merciful, and to that end would put on bowels of pity and compassion towards the wants and miseries of God's distressed ones; and stretch forth a helping hand towards their relief, which leadeth me to a second application, namely:

An exhortation, to stir up every one who have given up their names unto Christ, to make conscience, as of every duty commanded by him, so of this especially, which he hath so vehemently pressed upon us in his word, and encouraged us unto by many sweet and precious promises. This work of charity is wages, and like Samson's lion, it carrieth honey in its belly. He who, out of a principle of love in obedience to God's command, shall open his heart and hand wide to the poor, shall find God blessing his stock and store, and prospering all his undertakings. As there is a secret curse goes out from God upon the uncharitable man's estate, which blasteth all his projects and undertakings, whereby they prove altogether fruitless:
so there is a secret blessing goeth out from God upon the charitable man's estate, whereby he thrives and prospers in the world, even to his own and neighbour's admiration.

It is observed, that they are the richest merchants and citizens who trade boldly: whereas, they who are fearful to adventure their goods, have but small returns. In like manner it is found by experience, that such Christians as are most forward to supply the wants of the poor, boldly adventuring their goods upon the waters, do most of all thrive and prosper in the world. Why, then, will any man be so unwise, as to lose his riches for fear of losing them? And not rather seem to lose them that he may in truth find them? These earthly things are assuredly lost by keeping, and kept by well bestowing them.

What now remaineth, but that you look about you where you may lay out your money to the best advantage? Make diligent inquiry after the poor ministers and members of Christ: seek more after them than they do after you. For most certain it is that you get more by giving unto them than they do by receiving from you; and you are more beholding unto them for receiving your charity, than they are unto you for giving it. Whereas, you only relieve their bodies, they feed your souls, as, (Prov. xi. 17.) "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul," which is refreshed with the mercy which he sheweth to others. And whereas they partake of a small quantity of your outward good things, you shall have the same in kind here returned seven-fold into your bosoms; and at last shall be received into the kingdom of heaven, prepared for all those who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and performed such like works of charity to the poor members of Christ. (Matt. xxv. 35.) So that you benefit not
the poor so much by *giving*, as you profit yourselves by *receiving*.

Riches are a mere uncertainty, like unto a flock of birds in a man's field, who cannot say they are his because they sit there, for they take unto themselves wings and fly away. Now, in dealing with things uncertain, it will be your wisdom:

I. To make them as sure as you can.

II. To make the best use of them that you can.

1. What greater wisdom than to make sure? And what better way imaginable to make sure your estate, than by putting it into good hands? And what safer hands than the hands of the Lord? Put them into the hands of God's poor, and you thereby put them into God's hands.

As in a state politic, the ambassadors that are sent abroad to live in foreign kingdoms, do secure our peaceable state at home; so what we disperse and send abroad to the poor, secureth the rest at home; for as the poor beg of thee, so they beg of God for thee, that he would preserve and bless thy store: their devotions are sent up to heaven for thy security.

2. And what better use can you make of your riches than by bestowing a part of them upon the poor and needy? It being the chief end of giving more of this world's goods to some than to others, that they who have the greater store should give out thereof to them who are in want. This was typically signified by the Israelites gathering of manna, which, though it were rained down from heaven, yet the Lord would not allow that those who had gathered more than was needful for themselves and their household should hoard up their superfluity: but enjoined them to communicate their abundance to such as had not enough; so that he who had the most should have nothing over;
and he that had the least should have no lack. The which the apostle applieth to the giving of alms out of our abundance to those who want. (2 Cor. viii. 15.)

By communicating our riches to the poor, we shall make them our friends, both to give evidence for us of the truth of our faith and charity, and to beg a plentiful return upon us. This is the advice of our Saviour: (Luke xvi. 9.) "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Here, by mammon, our Saviour intendeth the abundance of this world's goods, which he called mammon of unrighteousness, because ordinarily, by worldly men, it is unrighteously gotten; unrighteously reserved; and unrighteously used. This he hinteth, that his disciples might be the more wary about it, and the more careful of making themselves friends thereof; that is, so to use their riches by relieving the poor, that the good works done by them may give testimony of their faith and charity, which is the part of friends. Friends are ready to give good testimony of one another. The coats and garments, which Dorcas made for poor widows, (Acts, ix. 39.) were such friends. But mark what follows—make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. When ye fail, that is, when ye depart out of this world, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. This particle, they, some refer to those who, being relieved, call upon God to recompense their benefactors; but most refer it to the riches which they bestow upon the poor, which, by virtue of the evidence that they give of the faith and charity of the giver, are said to receive them into everlasting habitations.
Surely, rich men have a price in their hands, wherewith to purchase to themselves a good inheritance, had they but hearts to make use of it. Though charity pretend not to any merit, ex congruo, or condigno, yet will it be plentifully recompensed by God both here and hereafter.

I hope you will pardon my zeal in pressing this duty of charity so much upon you. I do assure you, it is not out of any design to take anything from yourselves and children, but only to shew you the surest and safest way of thriving in the world; and how you may entail God's blessing upon your children, and so secure unto them the portion which you leave them. I am willing to do you a kindness, and I shall do you a great kindness, if I can but effectually persuade you to this duty. Whatever kindness I may herein do to those who need, I shall do a greater kindness to you who will be persuaded to help them in their need; inasmuch as it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive; and, therefore, bear with me, if I do not only offer you a kindness, but use such importunity to press you to accept it.

The apostle, knowing how backward rich men especially were to all works of charity, adviseth Timothy (1 Tim. vi. 17.) not only to commend unto them the duty, but to command it. The expression of the apostle is very observable, he doth not say, declare unto them, but charge them that are rich in this world, as they love their lives and would save their souls, to be rich in good works. As one wittily remarketh upon those words of the apostle, "If God should charge the rocks, they would send forth water; if the stones, they would become bread; if the ravens, they would feed Elijah; if the quails, they would victual the camp; if the clouds, they would rain down food from heaven upon his poor people. Will you

If you be rich in this world's goods, and be not rich in good works, talk not of your faith, for there can be no true faith without good works. (James ii. 17.) Neither tell me of your religion; for there can be no true religion in you, so long as you make no conscience of this duty. Pure religion, saith the apostle James, (chap. i. 27.) is this: "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and you never learned any other religion of us.

The Lord, indeed, giveth us leave to eat and to drink, and to cheer up our hearts by partaking in some measure, of that portion he hath bestowed upon us; but he never allowed us to keep all unto ourselves, or to spend it in the gratifying of our sinful lusts, but commands us to set apart some portion of our estate for the relief of those for whom nothing is provided. The wise man saith, "Honour the Lord with thy substance." (Prov. iii. 9.) He doth not say, honour thyself with thy riches, but, honour the Lord with them: as they come from his grace, so they should be used to his glory. Now, then, we use our riches to God's glory, when, in obedience to his command, we therewith supply the wants of his children, who will thereby be stirred up to bless and praise the name of God for his fatherly care and providence over them.

Have I yet again need to tell thee, that thy liberality to the poor cannot bring any loss to thy estate, seeing, the more thou givest, the more thou shalt receive? It is fabled of Midas, that whatsoever he touched was turned into gold: but it is no fable, nor fancy, that the hand of charity can do it—can extract grace out of your goods—
righteousness out of riches—and heaven out of earth. The imparting of goods to such good uses, whilst it seems to impair, doth mightily improve what you have, to your most singular advantage. The more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to be a rich man: the mercy of God will crown his beneficence with such a blessing of store that he shall find, he will never be behindhand with him. It is nothing which the poor receive from him, in comparison with that blessing which he shall receive from the Lord. It may be, thou dost not find thy store thereupon presently increased, yet, if thou diligently observest the passages of God's providence towards thee, thou wilt sooner or later find thyself abundantly reimbursed for all thy disbursements.

I told you before, that I am willing to do you a kindness, and that it may be a kindness indeed, I must further tell you, not only what you should do, but how you must do it, that you may not lose your reward. And if you would make sure to be gainers by whatever you thus lay out, observe the following directions:

I. Give yourselves to the Lord, and with yourselves, all that you have, to be so laid out, whether upon yourselves or others, as he doth appoint and require.

(2 Cor. viii. 2.) The apostle, boasting of the Macedonian Christians, and of the riches of their liberality, tells us, (v. 5.) that they first gave themselves to the Lord. He that will not give himself to the Lord, is like to give but little else. And if he should give all that he had, and only withhold himself, God will not accept nor reward it. God will have nothing of thee, if he may not have thy heart.

Give yourselves for servants to the Lord, to serve him with your spirits first, and then with all that you have.
Make over yourselves to God, in Christ, to be his covenant-servants, and thenceforth count and say of yourselves, as the apostle teacheth you: (1 Cor. vi. 20.) I am not mine own, but must henceforth glorify God with my body and my spirit, yea, and with all that I have, which are his.

He knows not what he says, that says I serve the Lord, who hath not first given himself to him for a servant; God will not be served by aliens. And he hath but lied unto God, who says, I give myself unto the Lord for a servant, and doth not actually serve him with all that he hath. He that hath given himself to the Lord, will withhold nothing from him that God will have.

He that will serve the Lord with his spirit, will as readily serve him with all that he hath. God that hath given us his Son, "how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. i. 32.) and that man that hath given God his soul, will keep back nothing from him.

Friend, thou sayest thou art the Lord's and hast devoted thyself to him; thou hopest that thou art Christ's and hast joined thyself in covenant unto him, resolving to be his disciple: but which way runs thine estate? Whose house is this, these lands, and this money which thou hast, are these the Lord's too? How is it then that thy lusts have so much of them at their service? That thy pride hath so much, and thine appetite so much, or that they are all impropropriated and kept by thee to feed thy covetousness? Is all thou hast the Lord's? How is it then that thou begrudgest or thinkest so much of every little that he calls for from thee? Thou who wilt not in every case part with so much as God calls for, art either a liar, or a robber. Either thou didst not give all to God, when thou saidst thou didst, and then thou art a liar; or if thou didst give all, and yet
will not let him have what he calls for, but bestowest it elsewhere, then thou art a robber.

*Obj.* But some will say, must I give all I have to the poor, and so leave myself and my family to be beggars? Or what else is your meaning, when you say, I must give all to the Lord?

My meaning is, that you so give all to the Lord, as to resolve to dispose of your whole estate to such persons and purposes as God orders and appoints you. The Lord would have you live and maintain yourself, and provide for your family soberly, according to your rank and degree (some extraordinary cases being excepted.) But still you must allow no more to yourself, nor no less to those in need, than is according to the will and good pleasure of the Lord.

Some other will here put in and say, But I am free and bountiful, and give great alms; I cast my bread upon the waters; I give a portion to six, and also to seven; I devise liberal things; I delight to shew mercy.

Dost thou so? It is well thou dost, God's blessing on thine heart for it. It is a great pity that any liberal man in the world should lose his reward; and that thou mayest not lose thine, take this counsel of a friend that loves thee. See that thou hast sincerely given up thyself to God as his covenant-servant, and art a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ; and that these thy works of mercy are done in pursuance of thy covenant, as a part of that service which thou owest and hast vowed to thy Lord, whose thou art, and whose talents thou reckonest all thou hast. And look to this the rather, because it is possible that men of great good works may be, as of little charity, so of little faith also, which is the grace which entitles God to us, and all we do, and
obtains our acceptance with him. First, by faith give thyself to him, and then by charity serve him with what thou hast, and then doubt not of a plentiful return.

II. Offer up your gifts upon the altar. Give yourselves, and with yourselves, all that you have, through Christ, unto God. Let him be your altar that sanctifies your gift; it is through him alone you will be accepted. “He hath made us accepted in the beloved.” (Eph. i. 6.) Let your souls be sprinkled with His blood, and thereby washed from your sins, from your natural and contracted guilt and pollution, and then they will be a gift acceptable to the Lord. Do not think you have no more to do but to give yourselves as you are to the Lord; you have given yourselves to sin, and now, it may be, you think you will give yourselves back to the Lord, but know there is more in it than this. Thou art in thyself a guilty and defiled soul, and God will have none of thee in this case: go to Christ first, and get him to cover thine unrighteousness, and to cleanse thee from thy filthiness, put thy wretched soul into his hands, and let him present it unto the Father.

And whatever thou givest with thyself: thine alms, thy bread, or thy flesh, or thy money, that thou hast for his poor, put it all into the same hand, and let him present this also to the Father for the use of his servants.

Friends, though I would have you givers, yet I would not have you losers. I would not have you losers, either by saving, or by unprofitable giving.

1. Be not losers by saving. That is the next way to lose all, by thinking to save, and keep all to yourselves. He that will save his life, that is, by not laying it down when God calls for it, he shall lose it; and so he that will save his estate, that is, by refusing to lay it out where God,
would have him; he is the more likely to lose all that he hath.

2. Lose not by unprofitable bestowing. All that is bestowed unprofitably as to thee, to whomsoever thou givest it, which is not given first through Christ unto God, and to his servants for the Lord's sake. It may be profit however to them, who receive it, but no profit to thee who givest. It is only what is given to God, and to men for God's sake, for which God becomes debtor.


1. Out of a willing heart, give willingly: (2 Cor. ix. 7.) "Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." An alms-deed in Scripture is called a sacrifice, such a sacrifice as is well-pleasing unto God. "To do good, and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 16.) Now all our christian sacrifices are to be free-will oblations. An alms without a will is a sacrifice without a heart, and will be rejected by God.

2. Out of a compassionate heart. Get a compassionate heart, and fetch all thine alms out of thine own bowels. It is the hard hearts of men that shut up their purses. Thou sayest that thou hast not to spare, thou wantest it thyself, or those about thee may want it: no, thou wantest a heart, and that is the reason that those that need must want thine alms. A compassionate heart would find something or other, for those who are in distress.
WAY OF THRIVING.

Get a compassionate heart. God is a God of compassion, and his children are compassionate children. Put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy. (Col. iii. 12.) “Whoso hath this world’s good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, (or is a man of no bowels,) how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John, iii. 17.) Whatever thy profession or religion may be, or thy hopes be concerning it, thou hast nothing of God in thee, thou art none of His, who hast no bowels. God is a God of mercy, his children are all merciful children.

Worldling, wilt thou prove thyself to be no child of God? Wouldst thou prove that the faith thou hast is vain, thy religion vain, and that thou art but a pretender to the love of God, and hast not the love of God within thee? This unmercifulness of thine will put it out of question. If thou hast no bowels of compassion, the love of God is not in thee.

O get a compassionate and merciful heart. Hast thou received mercy, and wilt thou not be merciful? Dost thou hope for mercy, and wilt thou not shew mercy? Put thyself into thy poor brother’s case awhile: think how hard it is with him, think of his hunger and nakedness, of his pressing straits and miseries; let thy soul go into his house and see his naked walls, his cold chimney, his empty cupboard, his starving children; and then think again, O how if it were thus with me! Ah poor distressed creatures: how are ye pinched and starved whilst I have enough and abound? O my bowels, how can you but yearn? O mine heart, how canst thou but bleed over such distressed ones? Hast thou nothing to help them? There is enough in my house, there is enough in my purse to yield them relief,
THE SUREST AND SAFEST

but is there no alms for them in my heart? Can I have the heart to see them pine and perish, and do nothing to help them? Where are ye, O my bowels? where are my compassions? O my soul, help, and send portions to them for whom nothing is provided.

3. Out of a thankful heart. Remember what God hath done for thee; hast thou any sense or experience of his special love to thee in Christ? what should that produce? The sense of divine goodness in a way of common Providence, calls for all due acknowledgment from us: but a taste of his paternal love in pardoning our sins, and justifying our persons, and reinstating us in eternal life and happiness, upon the account of his Son’s suffering and dying for us, this is the strongest motive to, and the most commanding reason of our charity or beneficence to our fellow-creatures, who stand in need of it.

In Christ the beams of God’s mercy are concentrated, (as the beams of the sun are in a burning glass,) which, falling upon our hearts, they are, or should be, thereby inflamed and made to burn with greater heat of love and kindness to all in want, especially to all who bear his image. The right spring of mercy to our neighbour, is the sense of God’s mercy towards us.

IV. Let all your streams of love flow into the ocean. My meaning is, let all be done to the glory of God. This must be your chief end, to which all must be directed, as the apostle charges: “Whether ye eat or drink,” I may add, or whether you give to eat or to drink, “or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Cor. x. 31.) Let this be chiefly in your eye and your heart, that God may be glorified. Other subordinate ends there are, as the refreshing of the needy, the adorning our holy profession, the edifica-
tion of others by our good example, but all at last must end here, that God may be glorified.

Take heed, your end be not to glorify yourselves. As worms breed in the fairest fruit, so pride and vain-glory are apt to creep up out of the best duties.

V. Let your works of charity be done in humility, giving unto God the honour of them: by acknowledging that as what you have bestowed on the poor, you first received from him; so it was his goodness to give you a heart to give anything out of your abundance towards their relief. Yea, you ought to be very jealous over yourselves, lest there hath been some hypocrisy and self-seeking in your works of charity; acknowledging that you are so far from meriting heaven and salvation by your good works, that if God should deal with you according to the rigour of his justice, he might cast you into hell, for that pride and hypocrisy which cleaves to your best works.

VI. Let your works of charity to men, be accompanied with prayers and thanksgivings unto God. Thank God that he hath put you amongst the givers, and not amongst the receivers; it being a more blessed thing to give than to receive; that he hath put you among the givers, and not the withholders; that he hath given you an estate to give, and a heart to give. Thank God that he will accept a gift at your hands: that he, whose is all you have, and to whom it is owing, will count that a gift, which is but the payment of so small a part of your debt. Say with David, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, both riches and honour come from thee; now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee,
and of thine own have we given thee.” (1 Chron. xxix. 11, 14.)

VII. Give out proportionably to what God hath given unto you. (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) The apostle adviseth the Corinthians to give, as God hath prospered them.

Rich men therefore ought to be rich in good works, for God expecteth fruit answerable to the seed which he soweth. Hath he abounded to you in this world’s goods? You ought thereupon to be abundant in good works towards others. Your pounds are expected, where the widow’s mites are accepted.

Having given you some directions as to the manner of bestowing your alms, I shall briefly show you the means how to attain to this grace of Christian charity.

Now the means I shall prescribe will be—

1. Such as tend to the bringing your hearts to be willing to this duty.

2. Such as shall tend to the helping of you for the better managing of it.

First, for means to bring your hearts to be willing to set upon this duty, take these—

1. Often call to mind and imprint in your memories the manifold precepts in the Scriptures, requiring this duty at your hands; as also the many gracious promises God hath there made for the encouragement of his people thereunto; and thereupon reason thus with thyself—what? Hath God commanded me (Deut. xv. 7—11.) to give unto my brother according to his necessity? To cast my bread upon the waters? (Eccl. xi. 1.) And hath our blessed Saviour commanded me (Luke vi. 38.) to give unto the poor? And hath the Lord for my encouragement thereunto promised, that he will bless me in all my works, and in all
that I put my hand unto, prosper me in my trade and calling? That my barns shall be filled with plenty? That what we shall give or lend unto the poor, he will pay us again with interest? That though I cast my bread upon the waters, where it may seem to be lost, yet I shall find it after many days, it shall certainly be returned into my bosom with increase? And hath my Saviour for my encouragement promised, That if I give unto the poor, it shall be given to me again; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, running over? (Luke vi. 38.) Then certainly there is no such compendious way to thrive and prosper in the world as by my liberality to the poor.

2. Prefer Heaven and the things thereof, before this earth, and earthly things. Though the temporal reward which I have so much insisted on, be a great encouragement, yet the greatest encouragement is the spiritual and eternal reward that the Lord hath promised. And that this may be the more prevailing encouragement, learn to esteem and prize things spiritual and eternal above all things that are but temporal. Suppose it should so fall out, that you should never receive in kind what you bestow, yet count those temporal things put off at the best rate, which you receive in things spiritual and eternal. Value grace and glory above all the treasures of the earth, and count yourselves to grow rich men according to your abounding in grace, and your evidences for glory. And esteem it an unthriftysaving and holding in, where you have an opportunity to improve in your inner man by expending of your outward substance.

Till heaven be valued above earth, this great argument encouraging to acts of bounty and mercy, will lose its efficacy. When God says, Cast thy bread upon the waters,
for thou shalt find it again after many days, the worldling will be ready to demand, but how shall I find it? In what way shall it be returned me? Shall I have bread for bread, or money for my bread, or houses or lands for my money? Probably thou mayest. But suppose not so, yet it shall be better than so, thou shalt have in grace what thou partest with in bread or money. Thou shalt reap in heaven, what thou sowest on the waters.

But the worldling will reply, I do not mean to part with my bread or my money so. No, I know thou dost not; but the reason is, because thou lovest this earth more than heaven. Thou sayest, will grace feed me? will grace clothe me? Can I keep myself and my family? Can we live and be maintained and preserved from poverty and beggary here, by hopes of glory hereafter?

Go fool, and learn better what God is, and what his everlasting mercy is; let the lasting treasures, the durable riches be more prized and valued by thee, and this will stop thy mouth, and silence thine heart from such vain reasonings. Thou wilt never again say, I cannot spare my bread, or my money, when by spending it for God thou seest thou makest him thy debtor, who will pay it thee again in spiritual and eternal good things, if once thou account these to be better than thy bread or thy money.

But till thou art come to be settled in this judgment and belief, both that the good things of God are infinitely better than the good things of this earth: and that what thou sowest in the earth thou shalt certainly reap in heaven; till thou comest in good earnest to be of this mind, God's poor are like to be but little the better for thee.

It is this, beloved, that will effectually do it, will open your hearts, and open your hands in bounty and liberality
for God, when you come to be rooted in the practical belief of this principle, upon which the practice of all religion stands, and is upheld in the world, that heaven is better than earth; if this other be added to it, that what is sincerely laid out for God in the earth, shall certainly be repaid in heaven; besides that return which the Lord here in this world oftentimes makes to the charitable.

For the means tending to help you for the better managing of it, take these following:

1. Either follow the example of the primitive saints, in setting apart something every Lord's day, out of the former week's gettings: or,

2. Devote unto God a certain portion of thy yearly income for charitable uses.

That the former way of setting apart something every Lord's day for the relief of the poor, was the practice of the primitive christians, is clear from that of the apostle to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, (which is the Lord's day,) let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." This way and course concerns such specially who live upon their daily labours.

But to such gentlemen, and others, who live upon their rents and offices, and to such merchants and citizens who once a year cast up their accounts, I would commend the latter way of devoting unto God a certain portion of their yearly income by rent or otherwise, and then separating it from the rest, to account it a sacred stock for the poor, not to be employed to any other use.

All men naturally (through the corruption that is in
them) are hard-hearted and close-handed, very unwilling to part with anything considerable, upon sudden occasions, for charitable uses. But having beforehand set apart something, their ears, hearts, and hands, are open to every charitable motion, and very ready and forward are they the more liberally to contribute thereunto of what is laid by, rejoicing that they have met with so good an object of charity.

As for the *quota pars*, what proportion every one ought to set apart out of his yearly income for good uses: I do not find it particularly set down in the word of God, and therefore dare not positively determine the same: and the rather, because there are so many circumstances which alter the case, that no certain rule can be given, but shall leave it to the discretion and ingenuity of the prudent christian.

But though the scripture doth not determine the exact proportion to be set apart for good works, yet doth it command us to give out proportionably to what God hath given unto us, to open our hands wide to the necessities of the poor, to be rich in good works, and the like. Yea, the scripture doth commend unto us the examples of very bountiful christians, as of Dorcas, who is said to be full of good works, and alms-deeds, which she did. (Acts ix. 36.) And of Cornelius, who is said to give much alms. (Acts x. 2.) And of the Macedonians, who are said to give to their power, yea, and beyond their power. (2 Cor. viii. 3.) It likewise commendeth unto us the example of Jacob, who in testimony of his thankfulness unto God, for what he should bestow upon him, vowed the tenth thereof unto God, for pious and charitable uses, "And Jacob vowed a vow unto God, saying, of all that thou shalt give
me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” (Gen. xxviii. 20, 22.)

These examples are left upon record for our imitation; for as the apostle speaketh, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.” (Rom. xv. 4.) The most that I have heard or read of, who have taken this course, to consecrate unto God a certain portion of their estate to charitable uses, have followed the example of Jacob, in giving a tenth part unto God. And as God did exceedingly bless Jacob after his vow, so hath he likewise blessed very many others, after the like vow unto God.

Mr. Stock, in his funeral sermon at the burial of Lord Harrington, speaking of his charity, declared that in his life-time, he gave the tenth part of his yearly revenue to the poor. Mr. Gataker, in his funeral sermon at the burial of Mr. John Parker, Merchant, and Citizen of London, speaking of his charity saith, that at his first effectual call, among other things he then resolved upon, this was one, to set apart every year a tenth part of his gain, for the relief of the poor and needy; and that God from that time abundantly advanced his estate. And questionless, if such Merchants, who usually insure their goods upon their apprehension of danger at sea, would sincerely promise unto God, in testimony of their thankfulness unto him, the tenth of what should come safe into their hands, they might receive far greater returns than they do.

In the life of Dr. Hammond, written by Dr. Fell, I find this expression, “The rate and sum of what the Doctor devoted, was the tenth of all his income, wherein he was so strictly punctual, that commonly the first thing he did was to compute and separate the poor man’s share.” And how
his stock increased notwithstanding his abundant giving out to the relief of others, the history at large declareth. The like I read in the life of Mr. William Wheatly, Minister of Banbury, how for many years he set apart the tenth of his yearly comings in, both out of his temporal and ecclesiastical means, and that his estate prospered the better after he took that course. To these I could add many more out of the lives of good and charitable men, and out of several funeral sermons, which are printed and published; and could name multitudes of men now living, who have devoted the like, and greater portion out of their estates for charitable uses, and are ready to attest the truth of this discourse, that they are no losers, but great gainers in temporals by what they have given to the poor.

Mr. Richard Baxter, in his learned and useful piece, called *A Christian Directory*, part the 4th, fol. 195, treating of the *quota pars*, what proportion is meet for most men to devote for charitable uses, whether the tenth part of their increase be not ordinarily a fit proportion? hath this expression,

"Though the proportion of the tenth part is too much for some, and much too little for others, yet for the most part I think it as likely a proportion as it is fit for another to prescribe in particular."

Yet I would not be thought to impose this as a proportion to be observed by all, for all men's hearts are not alike enlarged with love and bounty, and some there are who have no more than is necessary for the comfortable support of themselves and family, from whom less is required for the relief of others. But I would advise such whom the Lord hath blessed with a plentiful estate, so that their necessary expenses are, or might be, far less than their
incomes, to devote a tenth part of their whole yearly income, to charitable uses: I say of their whole yearly income, without first deducting any part thereof for diet, clothes, or other necessary expenses, for the tenth of the remainder will be a very inconsiderable proportion, for a rich man to devote to charity, and far short of that which the Scripture seemeth to call for.

And know assuredly, that this course is so far from being a means of diminishing your stock and store, that if it be managed as it ought, according to the forementioned rules and directions, it is the surest and safest means, the most compendious course of increasing it, through the secret blessing of God, which accompanyeth the same, which hath been sufficiently demonstrated in the fore-going discourse.

Be careful on whom thou bestowest thine alms; for by giving to such common beggars, who are able to work and yet are so lazy that they will not work, but would live by the sweat of other men's brows,—I say, by relieving such, we shall both maintain them in their idle and wicked life, and they who are truly poor, and ought to be looked upon as the proper objects of our charity, will be neglected, or at least scanted of that which belongeth to them.

I am not against the relieving of all beggars; some of them I know are blind, others lame, aged, and past their work; these impotent poor, in regard to their present condition, are objects of charity, but not the impudent poor, who have strength enough to work, and will not,—those canting vagrants, who are the burden of the earth, and shame of the kingdom, for these I have no charity; neither had the apostle St. Paul, who toward's God's poor, was full of compassion; but for the devil's poor, he gave this
command, (2 Thess. iii. 10.) “That if any would not work, neither should he eat,” that hunger and necessity might drive them to labour. Erasmus mentions a kind of mercy suitable for such—“misericordia puniens.” Surely, the whip is more their due than food,—Bridewell to entertain them, rather than an almshouse.

3. Another means for the attaining this grace of christian charity is this: be earnest with God in prayer, that he would be pleased to bestow upon thee that adorning and enriching grace of charity, and accept thy offering. This sacrifice, as it must be offered up to heaven, so it must be fetched from heaven. The gift of a merciful and charitable heart, is one of those gifts that come down from above, even from the Father of lights. (James i. 17.) If thou receivest not this gift from God, thy poor brother is like to have no gift from thee. Now, it must be thy prayer that must fetch down this gift from God. Lift up thy heart to the Lord, and beg a merciful and compassionate soul; beg of God that he would make thee ready to every good work, willing to communicate to the poor members of Christ, according to thine ability, and their necessity, that thereby thou mayest lay up in store for thyself a good foundation against the time to come, and so lay hold on eternal life: pray for a willing heart, and pray for acceptance of thy gift, that thine alms may be such a sacrifice, and so offered up, that therewith the Lord may be well pleased.

Having thus shewed you the means on our part to be performed for attaining and exercising this grace of charity, I shall close this discourse with answering two or three objections.

Obj. 1. Some object the greatness of their charge, the number of their children, who must be cared for, and thereupon have little to give to the poor.
WAY OF THRIVING.

Ans. 1. Hast thou many children? thou oughtst the rather to be charitable, that thereby thou mayest entail God's blessing upon them, which is the best portion, and surest inheritance thou canst leave them. That will secure their stock, and improve their store; whereas, unmercifulness to the poor will entail a curse, instead of a blessing, upon the persons and estates of thy children.

2. Thou who objectest the number of thy children as a reason for thy parsimony,—how justly may God, then, lessen the number, and so take away this excuse by taking thy children from thee.

3. Suppose thou hast many children, it may be half a score, reckon God for one more; give unto him a child's portion—I mean, bestow upon the poor, for his sake, as much every year as one child stands thee in; give unto them a child's portion, and I dare boldly say thou wilt not be the poorer, but rather a great gainer. For thereby wilt thou procure God's blessing upon thyself and children, which in truth is all in all; and without which, all is like to come to nothing, as we see by daily experience. That which thou givest out of thine estate to charitable uses, will be no loss to thy children, but rather a great advantage. Yea, the Spirit of God, in setting forth the happiness of a merciful man, saith, his children shall fare the better for his goodness and bounty, as, (Ps. xxxvii. 26.) "He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed;" that is, God will bless his children, not only with spiritual, but also with temporal blessings.

Obj. 2. Oh! many professors in these days are very barren in good works.

Ans. Fruitless and uncharitable Christians may make a
profession of religion, but, questionless, they are no sound christians, nor sincere professors; for most certain it is, that the elect of God do put on bowels of mercy and compassion, as the apostle speaketh, (Col. iii. 12.) and therefore, an uncharitable christian is a mere contradiction. For who is a christian, but he who conforms himself to the law and life of Christ, the substance of whose law is charity, and whose life was spent in going about doing good, some way or other, to the souls and bodies of men and women? Whosoever, therefore, having this world's goods, seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, and will not communicate anything considerable towards his necessities, let his profession be ever so specious and glorious in the eyes of men, yet certainly he is but a rotten professor and dissembling hypocrite in the sight of God. In Matt. xxv. 34, we find, that liberality to the members of Christ is made the special touchstone of true faith and godliness. For they are the charitable persons who at the great day of judgment will appear to be the sheep at Christ's right hand, and shall hear that joyful sentence of absolution, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

And on the other side, all unmerciful men, who have not relieved Christ in his members, whatsoever profession of religion they have made here in this world, yet, at the last day, will appear to be the goats set on Christ's left
hand, and shall hear that dreadful sentence of condemnation, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Hence it appeareth, that as mercy and bounty to the poor members of Christ is a conspicuous evidence of true faith and sincere godliness in a christian, and signally declare him pious, so illiberality and unmercifulness to them is a clear mark of infidelity and ungodliness, and signally declare him as an unbeliever; so a wicked and profane person. Therefore, I should much question the sincerity of their faith and piety, who, making a profession of religion, shew little or no charity to the poor members of Christ. For, as the apostle James speaketh: (chap. i. 27.) "Purer religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." Implying, that works of mercy and charity rightly performed, are clear evidences of the truth of our religion, and of the sincerity of our profession. And if you look into the Scriptures, you shall scarce read of a man truly godly, but you may read also, that he was merciful and charitable—forward to every good work. So much shall suffice for this point of doctrine.

A word or two for my brethren's sake on the first doctrine, raised from the foregoing verse, which is the principal point there intended by our Saviour, which was this—

That all needful succour, and good entertainment ought to be offered in special to the ministers of the Gospel.
Our Saviour, in commending objects to our charity, in
the first place mentioneth, prophets and righteous ones,
saying, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a
prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;" and then
addeth, "He that receiveth a righteous man in the name
of a righteous man," &c.

Indeed, so general must be the extent and emanation of
our charity, that it must not exclude any who are in want
and distress. For though we may, and ought to put a
difference between men upon whom we bestow our charity,
yet ought we not to restrain it from any men who are in
want; but must act the grace of charity towards them who
have not the grace of faith. Yea, we ought to do good
unto all, as the apostle exhorteth, (Gal. vi. 10.) but
"especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
And among them chiefly to the ministers of Christ. So as
this object of charity, prophet, is not here to be taken
exclusively, but by way of eminency and preferment: ministers are before and above others, with more readiness
and cheerfulness to be ministered unto.

The people of Israel, we read, were commanded once
and again not to leave nor forsake their Levites, especially
when they were reduced into any straits and exigences,
as in Deut. xii. 19, and xiv. 27. then, much less should
the ministers of the Gospel be left and forsaken by the
people of God, when they lie under any want or distress.

The examples of God's people who have gone before us
in the performance of this duty are many, both in the Old
and New Testament. It is recorded, to the perpetual
praise and commendation of Obadiah, that he hid the
prophets of God, by fifty in a cave, from the cruelty of
Jezebel, and sustained them with food, and ministered all
things necessary unto them. (1 Kings xviii. 13.) We read, likewise, how the widow of Sarepta nourished the prophet Elijah in her house for many days and years, even as long as the famine continued. (1 Kings xvii. 15, 16.) The kindness of the good Shunammite to the prophet Elisha, is largely commended. (2 Kings iv. 8, &c.) "It fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread;" that is, to refresh himself with food. "And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread." Having found good entertainment, and hearty welcome, he did the oftener visit the family. "And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick." Under these, other necessary accommodations are comprised. The good woman desired of her husband, that a chamber might be made for the prophet, on the wall; perhaps not that she wanted room in her house to lodge him in, but because she considered that the noise of a great family might be some disturbance to the prophet's study and devotion: therefore thought it convenient to provide such a chamber for him, where he might be more retired, and have free ingress and egress: that by these arrangements he might the oftener be encouraged to take up his lodging there. In Rom. xvi. 2, it is set down as the height and crown of Phebe's good works, that she had been a succourer of the apostle Paul in his wants and straits; and in 2 Tim. i. 16, we read how Onesiphorus refreshed and relieved the apostle in his suffering condition, and was not ashamed of his chain; that is, though he was a
prisoner, and under restraint for the Gospel’s sake, yet Onesiphorus owned him, shewed him all respect, succoured and relieved him in that his low condition. Gaius, likewise, a godly and wealthy citizen of Corinth, is famous for the kind entertainment and succour which he gave to the apostle, and the church with him. (Rom. xvi. 23.)

It is recorded, in commendation of King Edward the Sixth, that he afforded all needful succour and good entertainment to Bucer, Fagius, and other divines, when they fled into this kingdom on account of the troubles in their own nation.

Beza, in his epistle, ad Regem Jacobum, maketh an honourable mention of a liberal collection from the Church of Scotland, sent to the French ministers who were banished for the sake of their religion.

These are fair examples for us to follow, and indeed, why are such things written and left upon record to posterity, but for our learning? not so much for our own admiration, as for our imitation, that we might follow in their steps: as St. Paul testifies of the Macedonians, that very many of them were stirred up and provoked to a liberal contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem by the forwardness and zeal of the Corinthians. (2 Cor. ix. 2.) And St. Austin confesseth, “that the examples of God’s servants did burn and consume his own lukewarmness, and their fervent zeal set an edge on his devotion.”

To these examples I shall add a few reasons, the better to enforce this duty upon you.

Reason I.—Ministers, being supported, are likely to be most serviceable to the Church of God. They are spiritual fathers, to beget men unto Christ. They are his ambassadors, and stand in his stead to reveal the mysteries of the king-
dom; they are sent forth to be reconcilers between God and this sinful world, to pray and beseech them to be reconciled unto God. (2 Cor. v. 20.) Their work is to bear the name of God, to publish the salvation of God before the world, and to open the eyes of the blind, by turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Thus, ministers of the Gospel are more useful and serviceable in their generation than either lawyers, physicians, or tradesmen, though they are useful enough.

1. Lawyers, indeed, may be a means of settling your right in your goods and lands; but ministers, of settling your right to your heavenly inheritance.

2. Physicians may cure the maladies of your bodies; but ministers are sent to cure the diseases of your souls.

3. Merchants, and all sorts of tradesmen, may replenish a land with all manner of commodities necessary for this life; but ministers only bring in such heavenly and spiritual treasures as spring up into everlasting treasures; so that by supplying their bodily wants you do comfort and refresh the souls of many. And what better charity imaginable, than by relieving the temporal wants of some few to further the everlasting salvation of many? Oh what cause will their souls have to bless God to all eternity for your charity, who have been converted by the ministry of those whom you have refreshed and supported in their work.

Reason II.—Another reason may be taken from the consideration of the quality of the persons for whom I am pleading.

They are not so mean as they appear outwardly: they
whom you behold so poorly clad, walking so dejectedly, being destitute of many outward comforts, are men endow'd with many and singular prerogatives and privileges; not only above the rest of God's people, but likewise above the most glorious angels. Compare them first with the people of God, they are called the Lord's sheep: these are the shepherds of the flock. (Exek. xxxiv. 2.) They are children in God's family; these spiritual fathers, who by the seed of the word beget men unto God. (1 Cor. iv. 15.) Therefore the spirit of God vouchsafeth them this dignity to be called fellow-labourers with God.

Concerning angels, it is true that they and ministers are fellow-servants; (Rev. xxii. 9.) but yet ministers have sundry prerogatives above them.

1. Angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; (Luke xv. 10.) but by the ministry of prophets, sinners are converted unto God. (Acts xxvi. 18.)

2. An angel was sent to Cornelius, to advise him whither to go to be instructed; but a minister instructed him in the way of life. (Acts x. 6, 34.)

3. Was the word of reconciliation ever committed to angels? To ministers it is committed. (2 Cor. v. 18.) It is observable that the embassage of ministers, is not simply a message, but the gospel,—the gladsome tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, into which the angels themselves do desire to look, as the apostle Peter expresseth. (1 Peter i. 12.) The Lord hath also committed to his ministers the administration of the sacraments, which are the seals of his covenant, whereby all his precious promises are ratified and confirmed unto us: so that as in respect of the rich treasures of God's word committed to their dispensing, they are the Lord's treasurers; so in respect of the sacra-
ments, they are the keepers of his great seal. If these officers be great under mortal princes, what are they under the King of kings?

I have taken the liberty in a few words to set forth some of the privileges of the ministers of the gospel; partly for the comfort and consolation of many of them under the present misery and poverty which they suffer, rather than sin against their consciences; and partly to incite others to afford them that "double honour" which the apostle calls for, (1 Tim. v. 17.) namely, the honour of respect, and the honour of maintenance, that they suffer them not to sink under their burden, but afford them some seasonable succour and relief suitable to their present wants and necessities.

Reason III.—Because ministers are more often exposed to suffering and distress, and so have most need of relief. The bow of the adversaries of religion is bent most against the teachers and leaders of the people. That word "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel," (1 Kings xxii. 31.) is often changed into, fight neither with small nor great, but only against the prophets of the Lord: smite the shepherds, and the sheep will be scattered. Experience tells the world, who they are that are set in the front of the battle, and who are the first to fall by the power of the adversaries. And who should be most in the eye of charity but those that are most in the eye of malice? Besides, for whose sakes is it that ministers are so often brought so low? Is it not for your sakes, whose souls are dearer to them than their own substance? Is it not often upon this account, because they will be faithful to you, and will not keep silence, nor cease to watch over you, and warn and instruct you from day to
day? Might they not save themselves more whole, if they would hold their peace, and let the Devil alone, to have his will with you? For your sakes no doubt it is, that much of their sufferings come upon them, and shall they be forsaken of you? It is in truth upon this account, an act of justice as well as an act of mercy, to relieve and succour them; and so you may do two good works in one: the same alms may be both a work of righteousness and a work of mercy.

Reason IV.—Your gratitude to God requires a cheerful performance of this duty from you; for wherein can you otherwise make a suitable return to God, for what he hath plentifully conferred on you, than by contributing some of your temporals to them from whom you reap so much in spirituals? The Lord of his free grace and rich mercy hath abounded to you in these outward things; he hath given you all things, richly to enjoy; yea, as the Psalmist speaketh, He hath loaded you with his benefits. Now, not to return some part of your estate to him who hath given you all that you enjoy, were ingratitude in the highest degree; and therefore how doth it concern you often to put the Psalmist’s question to yourselves, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?” (Ps. cxvi. 12.) Surely one kindness deserveth another:—as God hath been bountiful to you, surely you are very unworthy, if you be not bountiful to his. And how do you think he will take it at your hands? Will he ever say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful,” a good steward of my many gifts? or is it all one to you, whether he say, “Well done,” or not?

And as you cannot directly and immediately requite
him, who is incapable of being enriched by us, "My goodness extendeth not to thee:" (Ps. xvi. 2.) it will be your wisdom to express your thankfulness to God, by being kind to his poor relations. Now who are nearer to God than his ministers, whom He hath appointed to stand in his room, to declare his mind unto his people; who are as the mouth of the people to God, and God's mouth to the people: who are the messengers of the Lord of Hosts, by whose ministry there is peace concluded, and reconciliation proclaimed between God and man? Surely what kindness you show to these, he takes as done unto himself. (Matt. xxv. 40.)

Reason V.—Your relieving the faithful ministers of Christ, may in a sense be said to have something more in it, than if you should shew your charity to himself, in his own person; as being a sign of greater love. It is but an ordinary thing to return kindness to our dearest friends; but to extend our good-will to their relations or servants, for their sakes, is an evidence of much greater love: for if upon their account only we do good unto these, how much more would it be judged should we be ready to do it unto themselves, if they stood in need of our help? And so will Christ look upon it: our bounty expressed to his ministers he will receive as an evidence of our more abundant love unto him, which he will in no-wise forget, nor suffer to go unrewarded.

Reason VI.—Such as relieve the poor ministers of Christ shall have their blessing, and the benefit of their prayers unto God. They will bless you however, though you have no blessing for them. Though you have not an alms for them, yet they will have a prayer for you: but their bowels being refreshed by you, you may expect that
their hearts will be more enlarged for you; and this will be a far greater kindness than you can bestow on them: your gift cannot be worth their fervent prayers, in this respect it is much better to give than to receive; because he that receives hath but a perishing alms: he that gives, receives an abiding blessing—the blessing of prayers.

In this manner did the apostle St. Paul make a large requital to Onesiphorus, for the kindness he shewed to him in his imprisonment; as you may read, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." (2 Tim. i. 16.) As if he had said, I received much comfort and refreshment from Onesiphorus, when I was in prison, for the which, I beseech the Father of all mercies to shew mercy unto him and his, by blessing him and his whole family, with all blessings, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And what blessing can that man want who hath a share in many minister's prayers? which are available for the obtaining of all good things, at the hand of God, both for themselves and others.

Yea, the work of charity doth bespeak a blessing from God: as the blood of Abel is said to cry to the Lord for a curse or vengeance upon Cain; so every act of charity crieth to God for a blessing upon the charitable; our very acts of charity, in relieving the wants of the poor, and refreshing their bowels, do pray and cry to God for his blessing upon us and ours.

Reason VII.—Your charity to them will be hereafter rewarded with everlasting glory and happiness in the kingdom of heaven. This reason our Saviour himself giveth in these words: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;"
whereby is meant that surpassing and excellent weight of glory, which cannot be expressed by the tongue of men or angels. Yea, by the reward of a prophet seemeth to be implied the highest degree of heavenly glory; for it is said, "They that be wise," that is; the righteous, who are endowed with true spiritual wisdom, being enlightened by the Spirit of God, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness" which is the work of prophets, "as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.)

Now by your bounty to the prophets of God, you may come to partake of their reward; so that it is to your own interest to contribute liberally towards their relief: not that your charity to them doth merit that glorious reward; but because of the promise of God made to all those who do exercise the same towards his ministers, it shall truly be given unto them.

In conclusion, oh! how should the consideration of these things stir up the hearts of all, and especially of such as have a blessing in their hand, and estate to give, to draw forth their souls, and reach forth their hands, to the supply of these wanting servants of God. Surely, this is a time wherein Christ is trying your love to him by your charity to them. Are you not concerned to make proof of your love to Christ? Have you not an opportunity before you, and a loud call from heaven to prove it in this way? Can you not hear him who once said to Peter, (John xvi. 16.) "Lovest thou me?—feed my sheep." Can you not hear the same voice calling to you, "Lovest thou me?—feed my shepherds." Sure thou art very deaf to the voice of the providence of this day, if thou dost not hear this call. And will you prove that you have no love to Christ, for what
else do you do if you suffer his to starve when you have wherewith to feed them?

Beloved, it is through God's free grace and rich bounty, that you enjoy such plenty of outward good things, when many of his ministers are in great want. What you have, you have received from him; is it not then, most just and reasonable that you should return some portion of your estates unto God, by relieving his ministers, in testimony of your love and thankfulness to him for what you have? Hath God given you hundreds and thousands, and will you not part with a few pounds or shillings, when he calls aloud unto you for the same, as he now doth in these days? Though the earth be his, and the fulness thereof, yet, (in a sense) he sometimes hath need of your estates. In Matt. xxv. 35, Christ telleth you of his wants, and sheweth you how and when he is relieved.

If you have any spiritual wisdom to discern times and seasons, you may know that now Christ stands in need of your helping hand, when so many of his ministers are in want for the testimony of a good conscience: and should you now deny him in his ministers, I do verily believe that if Christ were now upon earth, as when he first took our nature upon him, and in his own dear person should crave your relief, you would turn a deaf ear unto him.

Though, for the present, you enjoy manifold blessings, yet how easily can he pluck them out of your mouths, and if you will not perform your duty, thrust you down from among the givers, to take your place among the receivers! Certainly, the communicating a part is the best way to secure the remainder, and to season and sanctify it to your more comfortable use.

Our Saviour saith, (Luke xi. 41.) "Give alms of such
things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you;" that is, lawful to be used. The metaphor is taken from the law, whereby many things were counted unclean, and so, unlawful for use: they might not be touched or meddled with. Yea, by our Lord's inference: "Give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you," he seems to allude to another rite of the law about firstfruits, tithes, and freewill offerings, by giving which to God, all the rest which they had was secured, sanctified, and made clean: so that charitable men are those who may with the most freedom, quietness, and comfort, use what they have. Who that hath any desire to be accepted and approved of God, would not have his person, and the actions which he doth, and the things which he possesseth, to be clean? whatsoever is unclean is odious and abominable in God's sight: unclean persons might not approach to God's sanctuary, nor meddle with sacred matters; if they were not cleansed, they were to be cut off from God's people, (Num. xix. 20; Lev. vii. 20.) and every unclean thing was an abomination.

This, therefore, must needs be a strong persuasive to put in practice the counsel of our Saviour, in giving alms of such things as we have, that so all things may be clean and sanctified unto us. What is clean you may use with God's free permission and allowance, (clean things may be eaten,) and where you have God's permission, you may expect his blessing: but, it is a sin to eat when God's portion is among it.

It is the great mistake of many to think that all their goods are their own, and that they are absolute lords and owners of all which they possess; whereas, they are rather stewards than lords or owners of this world's goods; all
is the Lord's. God of his infinite wisdom hath committed
to some a greater portion of them than to others; yet not
to be impropriated to themselves, but they must give him
his special part, to which his have as good a right as them-
svelves unto the rest, saving only that they may not lay
hands on it themselves until you put it into their hands.
But as they may not take it out of yours, so you may not
keep it out of their hands: therefore, Solomon, speaking of
the right which the poor have to a part of rich men's
estates, says: "Withhold not good from them to whom it
is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it."
(Prov. iii. 27.) So that relieving the poor is not only an
act of mercy, left to our choice to do or leave undone; but
also, as I said before, an act of justice, to the performance
whereof we are bound. Hence, to give alms, and to do
righteousness and justice, are often in Scripture put the
one for the other, both signifying the same thing: there-
fore, the Septuagint has the Hebrew word signifying
righteousness, in Deut. xxiv. 13, rendered "alms-deed;"
and in Ps. cxii. 9, it is said: "His righteousness endureth
for ever;" that is, his alms or his mercifulness; as is clear
from the foregoing words: "He hath dispersed, he hath
given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever:"
whereby is implied, that giving of alms is one special
branch of that righteousness and justice we owe to our poor
neighbours. And darest thou yet hold it in thy hand? Wilt thou wrong the Almighty of his right, and rob the
poor of their due. If it be nothing with thee to be unmer-
ciful, is it nothing to be a robber—a robber of God?
"Will a man rob God?" (Mal. iii. 8.)—dares any man be
so wicked? How can you but expect that he will make a
forcible entry upon thee, and take what is his own, and
seal a writ of ejectment against thee, and turn thee out of all thou hast? Look not to be long in quiet possession of what thou hast; but fear lest either God should take thine estate from thee, or thee from thine estate; and give thee thy portion with Dives, who because he denied his crumbs to satisfy the hunger of poor Lazarus, was himself denied a drop of cold water to quench his own heat and thirst. (Luke xvi. 23, 26.) Upon which words, St. Austin thus remarketh: "Therefore was not Dives heard, when he prayed in torments, because he hearkened not to the poor that begged of him when he was upon earth."

Let me add a few quickening words to carry home what has been spoken by the following questions:—

**Quest. I.** Now, at length, what dost thou think of mercy and bounty to the poor?

1. Is there not an excellency in it? Oh, how much of God there is in it, there is faith in it: he that will cast his bread upon the water, is it not a sure sign that he believes God, who hath said that it shall be returned again? There is the love of God in it: "Whoso seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" And he that openeth his bowels, and draws forth his soul to God's hungry ones, who can deny but the love of God dwelleth in that man? It is the image of God's goodness. God is a merciful God, and his mercy is his glory, and this glory of God shineth forth in his merciful servants. There is self-denial in it: self would keep all, flesh would hold back,—it cannot spare for God; it is a sign that self is laid low, that the flesh is kept under, that the interest of God is the swaying interest, when, whatever God will have, this self is not suffered to keep back. Is there so much
of God in mercifulness, and is there not an excellency in it?

2. Is there not a necessity for it? Shall the merciless ever obtain mercy? Canst thou hope for mercy who wilt shew no mercy?

**Quest. II.** What dost thou think of thyself? Art thou merciful or merciless? How dost thou find it, is thine heart open, are thy bowels open, or are they still shut? Dost thou feel that heart of thine inclined and resolved to open thy hands, and to disperse, and that liberally, the good things thou hast received, as a good steward of the manifold gifts of God? or, dost thou yet feel that the door is shut, thine heart is hardened against shewing kindness to the Lord? Give thy plain judgment, what thinkest thou? Art thou a merciful man or merciless; and if merciless, how dost thou hope to obtain mercy?

**Quest. III.** What dost thou think of thy worldly goods?

1. Are they not thy talents committed to thee for thy Lord's use? Must thou not be accountable to him how they have been laid out? Will it be a comfortable account, when thou must bring in thy bill,—so much for thy pride, so much for thine appetite, or all hoarded up for thy covetousness, and nothing, or but little, for God?

2. Are they worth more than treasures in heaven? Is it more to thine advantage to be rich in this world's goods than to be rich in good works? Dost thou in good earnest judge, that thy laying up treasures in earth is better husbandry than thy laying up in store for thyself a good foundation against the time to come?

**Quest. IV.** What dost thou think of the state of many of the servants of God in this age? Are there no wanting ones—no distressed ones? what, neither amongst ministers
nor christians, are they all provided for—do not many of them eat the bread and drink the waters of affliction? Is it not very strait and very short with them? Do but inquire after their condition, and thou wilt find it so. Art thou one of those who care not how it fares with the poor friends of Christ? Are they not worth the inquiring and looking after? or at least, is not he worthy whose they are, and whom they serve? Is not Christ worthy, for whose sake thou shouldst shew kindness to his? How will he take thy neglect of them? remember that word: (Matt. xxv. 45.) "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

Quest. V. What wilt thou do for the future? What shall be the success of these few words that are written for thy learning? What art thou resolved upon—mercy or cruelty? consult thine own heart: lay not by this little book, until thou art come to a resolution one way or other, either to accept or to reject this counsel, which in the name of the Lord is offered thee for thy good. Oh, shew thyself, a man in whose soul Christ hath an interest; and so great an interest that thou wilt do anything at his word; pity at his word—relieve at his word—give, lend, feed, clothe, refresh the bowels of his needy ones. Let thy soul say, Lord, at thy word I will do it: here's my bread, and my flesh, and my money, command what thou wilt of it, I will not say thee nay. Thou hast given me a large portion, and every one of thy servants that thou appointest to receive it, shall have their part: for thy sake, Lord, they shall have it. Thine I am, and thine is all that I have, shew me thy pleasure, how much, and how often, and where, and to whom I shall bestow it; and through the grace of God there it shall go.
Friend, wilt thou say thus? Wilt thou in the presence of the Lord come to this gracious resolution, or canst thou yet find in thine heart to deny thy Lord, and continue to be as hard-hearted and close-handed as thou wast wont to be. Dare not to say, Lord, my goods are mine own, I owe thee nothing. Dread such a thought, that how much soever thou hast, the servants of Christ shall be nothing the better for it.

Once again, consider, thou art put to this choice, either to accept of the counsel of Christ or to reject it: which of the two wilt thou do? If thou resolvest not on mercy and liberality, thou rejectest the word of the Lord; and if thou rejectest his word, thou rejectest the Lord, and therein sayest, He shall be no Lord for me. But if thou acceptest, then go and do accordingly; let the hunger, and the thirst, and the nakedness, the wants and distresses of his servants feel by that relief they shall receive from thee, that thou art a man to whom the Lord hath not spoken in vain: let them feel it presently, and let them feel it constantly; this year—and the next year—and the next—even whilst they need to receive, and thou hast it by thee to give. This do, and the Lord accept thee, remember all thy offerings, and accept all thy sacrifices. The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. The Lord remember thee with the favour he beareth unto his children, and visit thee with his salvation.
A SERMON
ON
GOOD WORKS,
IN WHICH SEVERAL CASES OF CONSCIENCE CONCERNING
ALMS-GIVING ARE RESOLVED.

THE APOSTLE’S CHARGE CONCERNING RICH MEN,
TO BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."—(1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.)

The sum of these words is, a direction for rich men, how to make the best use of their riches; the ground or occasion of this direction is, to meet an objection which might be made against the disadvantage and danger of riches spoken of in verses 9, 10. “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the
else do you do if you suffer wherewith to feed them?

Beloved, it is through God that you enjoy such plenty of many of his ministers are in you have received from him and reasonable that you should your estates unto God, by remembrance of your love and thankful have? Hath God given you will you not part with a few poor calls aloud unto you for the same days? Though the earth be his yet, (in a sense) he sometimes In Matt. xxv. 35, Christ telleth sheweth you how and when he is

If you have any spiritual wisdom, you may know that now your helping hand, when so many want for the testimony of a good you now deny him in the others, if Christ were not, you would his nature upon your reliance.

The earth, yet, (in a sense) he sometimes
provided for—do not many of the waters of affliction? Is short with them? Do but and thou wilt find it so. Art not how it fares with the poor not worthy the inquiring and not he worthy whose they are, not Christ worthy, for whose kindness to his? How will he remember that word: (Matt. he did it not to one of the least

1. Are they not thy Lord's use? Must thou thy resolved upon—mercy or own heart: lay not by this little to a resolution one way or other, let this counsel, which in the name for thy good. Oh, shew thyself, Christ hath an interest; and so great do anything at his word; pity at his word—give, lend, feed, clothe, his needy ones. Let thy soul say, I do it: here's my bread, and my command what thou wilt of it, I Thee hast given me a large portion, thou appointest to their part: for thy sake, Lord, they I am, and thine is all that I have, I shall bestow it; and through the

2. Are there so much for thine appetitiveness, and nothing, or it more to judge, than to be

Quest. III. What shall go?
prisoner, and under restraint for the Gospel's sake, yet Onesiphorus owned him, shewed him all respect, succoured and relieved him in that his low condition. Gaius, likewise, a godly and wealthy citizen of Corinth, is famous for the kind entertainment and succour which he gave to the apostle, and the church with him. (Rom. xvi. 23.)

It is recorded, in commendation of King Edward the Sixth, that he afforded all needful succour and good entertainment to Bucer, Fagius, and other divines, when they fled into this kingdom on account of the troubles in their own nation.

Beza, in his epistle, \textit{ad Regem Jacobum}, maketh an honourable mention of a liberal collection from the Church of Scotland, sent to the French ministers who were banished for the sake of their religion.

These are fair examples for us to follow, and indeed, why are such things written and left upon record to posterity, but for our learning? not so much for our own admiration, as for our imitation, that we might follow in their steps: as St. Paul testifieth of the Macedonians, that very many of them were stirred up and provoked to a liberal contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem by the forwardness and zeal of the Corinthians. (2 Cor. ix. 2.)

And St. Austin confesseth, "that the examples of God's servants did burn and consume his own lukewarmness, and their fervent zeal set an edge on his devotion."

To these examples I shall add a few reasons, the better to enforce this duty upon you.

Reason I.—Ministers, being supported, are likely to be most serviceable to the Church of God. They are spiritual fathers, to beget men unto Christ. They are his ambassadors, and stand in his stead to reveal the mysteries of the king-
dom; they are sent forth to be reconcilers between God and this sinful world, to pray and beseech them to be reconciled unto God. (2 Cor. v. 20.) Their work is to bear the name of God, to publish the salvation of God before the world, and to open the eyes of the blind, by turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Thus, ministers of the Gospel are more useful and serviceable in their generation than either lawyers, physicians, or tradesmen, though they are useful enough.

1. Lawyers, indeed, may be a means of settling your right in your goods and lands; but ministers, of settling your right to your heavenly inheritance.

2. Physicians may cure the maladies of your bodies; but ministers are sent to cure the diseases of your souls.

3. Merchants, and all sorts of tradesmen, may replenish a land with all manner of commodities necessary for this life; but ministers only bring in such heavenly and spiritual treasures as spring up into everlasting treasures; so that by supplying their bodily wants you do comfort and refresh the souls of many. And what better charity imaginable, than by relieving the temporal wants of some few to further the everlasting salvation of many? Oh what cause will their souls have to bless God to all eternity for your charity, who have been converted by the ministry of those whom you have refreshed and supported in their work.

Reason II.—Another reason may be taken from the consideration of the quality of the persons for whom I am pleading.

They are not so mean as they appear outwardly: they
whom you behold so poorly clad, walking so dejectedly, being destitute of many outward comforts, are men endowed with many and singular prerogatives and privileges; not only above the rest of God’s people, but likewise above the most glorious angels. Compare them first with the people of God, they are called the Lord’s sheep: these are the shepherds of the flock. (Exek. xxxiv. 2.) They are children in God’s family; these spiritual fathers, who by the seed of the word beget men unto God. (1 Cor. iv. 15.) Therefore the spirit of God vouchsafeth them this dignity to be called fellow-labourers with God.

Concerning angels, it is true that they and ministers are fellow-servants; (Rev. xxii. 9.) but yet ministers have sundry prerogatives above them.

1. Angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; (Luke xv. 10.) but by the ministry of prophets, sinners are converted unto God. (Acts xxvi. 18.)

2. An angel was sent to Cornelius, to advise him whither to go to be instructed; but a minister instructed him in the way of life. (Acts. x. 6, 34.)

3. Was the word of reconciliation ever committed to angels? To ministers it is committed. (2 Cor. v. 18.) It is observable that the embassage of ministers, is not simply a message, but the gospel,—the gladsome tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, into which the angels themselves do desire to look, as the apostle Peter expresseth. (1 Peter i. 12.) The Lord hath also committed to his ministers the administration of the sacraments, which are the seals of his covenant, whereby all his precious promises are ratified and confirmed unto us: so that as in respect of the rich treasures of God’s word committed to their dispensing, they are the Lord’s treasurers; so in respect of the sacra-
ments, they are the keepers of his great seal. If these officers be great under mortal princes, what are they under the King of kings?

I have taken the liberty in a few words to set forth some of the privileges of the ministers of the gospel; partly for the comfort and consolation of many of them under the present misery and poverty which they suffer, rather than sin against their consciences; and partly to incite others to afford them that "double honour" which the apostle calls for, (1 Tim. v. 17.) namely, the honour of respect, and the honour of maintenance, that they suffer them not to sink under their burden, but afford them some seasonable succour and relief suitable to their present wants and necessities.

Reason III.—Because ministers are more often exposed to suffering and distress, and so have most need of relief. The bow of the adversaries of religion is bent most against the teachers and leaders of the people. That word "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel," (1 Kings xxii. 31.) is often changed into, fight neither with small nor great, but only against the prophets of the Lord: smite the shepherds, and the sheep will be scattered. Experience tells the world, who they are that are set in the front of the battle, and who are the first to fall by the power of the adversaries. And who should be most in the eye of charity but those that are most in the eye of malice? Besides, for whose sakes is it that ministers are so often brought so low? Is it not for your sakes, whose souls are dearer to them than their own substance? Is it not often upon this account, because they will be faithful to you, and will not keep silence, nor cease to watch over you, and warn and instruct you from day to
day? Might they not save themselves more whole, if they would hold their peace, and let the Devil alone, to have his will with you? For your sakes no doubt it is, that much of their sufferings come upon them, and shall they be forsaken of you? It is in truth upon this account, an act of justice as well as an act of mercy, to relieve and succour them; and so you may do two good works in one: the same alms may be both a work of righteousness and a work of mercy.

Reason IV.—Your gratitude to God requires a cheerful performance of this duty from you; for wherein can you otherwise make a suitable return to God, for what he hath plentifully conferred on you, than by contributing some of your temporals to them from whom you reap so much in spirituals? The Lord of his free grace and rich mercy hath abounded to you in these outward things; he hath given you all things, richly to enjoy; yea, as the Psalmist speaketh, He hath loaded you with his benefits. Now, not to return some part of your estate to him who hath given you all that you enjoy, were ingratitude in the highest degree; and therefore how doth it concern you often to put the Psalmist's question to yourselves, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" (Ps. cxvi. 12.) Surely one kindness deserveth another:—as God hath been bountiful to you, surely you are very unworthy, if you be not bountiful to his. And how do you think he will take it at your hands? Will he ever say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful," a good steward of my many gifts? or is it all one to you, whether he say, "Well done," or not?

And as you cannot directly and immediately requite
him, who is incapable of being enriched by us, "My goodness extendeth not to thee:" (Ps. xvi. 2.) it will be your wisdom to express your thankfulness to God, by being kind to his poor relations. Now who are nearer to God than his ministers, whom He hath appointed to stand in his room, to declare his mind unto his people; who are as the mouth of the people to God, and God's mouth to the people: who are the messengers of the Lord of Hosts, by whose ministry there is peace concluded, and reconciliation proclaimed between God and man? Surely what kindness you show to these, he takes as done unto himself. (Matt. xxv. 40.)

Reason V.—Your relieving the faithful ministers of Christ, may in a sense be said to have something more in it, than if you should shew your charity to himself, in his own person; as being a sign of greater love. It is but an ordinary thing to return kindness to our dearest friends; but to extend our good-will to their relations or servants, for their sakes, is an evidence of much greater love: for if upon their account only we do good unto these, how much more would it be judged should we be ready to do it unto themselves, if they stood in need of our help? And so will Christ look upon it: our bounty expressed to his ministers he will receive as an evidence of our more abundant love unto him, which he will in no-wise forget, nor suffer to go unrewarded.

Reason VI.—Such as relieve the poor ministers of Christ shall have their blessing, and the benefit of their prayers unto God. They will bless you however, though you have no blessing for them. Though you have not an alms for them, yet they will have a prayer for you: but their bowels being refreshed by you, you may expect that
their hearts will be more enlarged for you; and this will
be a far greater kindness than you can bestow on them:
your gift cannot be worth their fervent prayers, in this
respect it is much better to give than to receive; because
he that receives hath but a perishing alms: he that gives,
receives an abiding blessing—the blessing of prayers.

In this manner did the apostle St. Paul make a large
requital to Onesiphorus, for the kindness he shewed to him
in his imprisonment; as you may read, "The Lord give
mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed
me, and was not ashamed of my chain." (2 Tim. i. 16.)
As if he had said, I received much comfort and refresh-
ment from Onesiphorus, when I was in prison, for the
which, I beseech the Father of all mercies to shew mercy
unto him and his, by blessing him and his whole family,
with all blessings, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal.
And what blessing can that man want who hath a share
in many minister's prayers? which are available for the
obtaining of all good things, at the hand of God, both for
themselves and others.

Yea, the work of charity doth bespeak a blessing from
God: as the blood of Abel is said to cry to the Lord for a
curse or vengeance upon Cain; so every act of charity
crieth to God for a blessing upon the charitable; our very
acts of charity, in relieving the wants of the poor, and
refreshing their bowels, do pray and cry to God for his
blessing upon us and ours.

Reason VII.—Your charity to them will be hereafter
rewarded with everlasting glory and happiness in the
kingdom of heaven. This reason our Saviour himself
giveth in these words: "He that receiveth a prophet in
the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;"
whereby is meant that surpassing and excellent weight of glory, which cannot be expressed by the tongue of men or angels. Yea, by the reward of a prophet seemeth to be implied the highest degree of heavenly glory; for it is said, "They that be wise," that is, the righteous, who are endowed with true spiritual wisdom, being enlightened by the Spirit of God, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness" which is the work of prophets, "as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.)

Now by your bounty to the prophets of God, you may come to partake of their reward; so that it is to your own interest to contribute liberally towards their relief: not that your charity to them doth merit that glorious reward; but because of the promise of God made to all those who do exercise the same towards his ministers, it shall truly be given unto them.

In conclusion, oh! how should the consideration of these things stir up the hearts of all, and especially of such as have a blessing in their hand, and estate to give, to draw forth their souls, and reach forth their hands, to the supply of these wanting servants of God. Surely, this is a time wherein Christ is trying your love to him by your charity to them. Are you not concerned to make proof of your love to Christ? Have you not an opportunity before you, and a loud call from heaven to prove it in this way? Can you not hear him who once said to Peter, (John xvi. 16.) "Lovest thou me?—feed my sheep." Can you not hear the same voice calling to you, "Lovest thou me?—feed my shepherds." Sure thou art very deaf to the voice of the providence of this day, if thou dost not hear this call. And will you prove that you have no love to Christ, for what
else do you do if you suffer his to starve when you have wherewith to feed them?

Beloved, it is through God's free grace and rich bounty, that you enjoy such plenty of outward good things, when many of his ministers are in great want. What you have, you have received from him; is it not then, most just and reasonable that you should return some portion of your estates unto God, by relieving his ministers, in testimony of your love and thankfulness to him for what you have? Hath God given you hundreds and thousands, and will you not part with a few pounds or shillings, when he calls aloud unto you for the same, as he now doth in these days? Though the earth be his, and the fulness thereof, yet, (in a sense) he sometimes hath need of your estates. In Matt. xxv. 35, Christ telleth you of his wants, and sheweth you how and when he is relieved.

If you have any spiritual wisdom to discern times and seasons, you may know that now Christ stands in need of your helping hand, when so many of his ministers are in want for the testimony of a good conscience: and should you now deny him in his ministers, I do verily believe that if Christ were now upon earth, as when he first took our nature upon him, and in his own dear person should crave your relief, you would turn a deaf ear unto him.

Though, for the present, you enjoy manifold blessings, yet how easily can he pluck them out of your mouths, and if you will not perform your duty, thrust you down from among the givers, to take your place among the receivers! Certainly, the communicating a part is the best way to secure the remainder, and to season and sanctify it to your more comfortable use.

Our Saviour saith, (Luke xi. 41.) "Give alms of such
things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you;” that is, lawful to be used. The metaphor is taken from the law, whereby many things were counted unclean, and so, unlawful for use: they might not be touched or meddled with. Yea, by our Lord’s inference: “Give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you,” he seems to allude to another rite of the law about firstfruits, tithes, and freewill offerings, by giving which to God, all the rest which they had was secured, sanctified, and made clean: so that charitable men are those who may with the most freedom, quietness, and comfort, use what they have. Who that hath any desire to be accepted and approved of God, would not have his person, and the actions which he doth, and the things which he possesseth, to be clean? whatsoever is unclean is odious and abominable in God’s sight: unclean persons might not approach to God’s sanctuary, nor meddle with sacred matters; if they were not cleansed, they were to be cut off from God’s people, (Num. xix. 20; Lev. vii. 20.) and every unclean thing was an abomination.

This, therefore, must needs be a strong persuasive to put in practice the counsel of our Saviour, in giving alms of such things as we have, that so all things may be clean and sanctified unto us. What is clean you may use with God’s free permission and allowance, (clean things may be eaten,) and where you have God’s permission, you may expect his blessing: but, it is a sin to eat when God’s portion is among it.

It is the great mistake of many to think that all their goods are their own, and that they are absolute lords and owners of all which they posses; whereas, they are rather stewards than lords or owners of this world’s goods; all
is the Lord's. God of his infinite wisdom hath committed
to some a greater portion of them than to others; yet not
to be impropriated to themselves, but they must give him
his special part, to which his have as good a right as them-
selves unto the rest, saving only that they may not lay
hands on it themselves until you put it into their hands.
But as they may not take it out of yours, so you may not
keep it out of their hands: therefore, Solomon, speaking of
the right which the poor have to a part of rich men's
estates, says: "Withhold not good from them to whom it
is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it."
(Prov. iii. 27.) So that relieving the poor is not only an
act of mercy, left to our choice to do or leave undone; but
also, as I said before, an act of justice, to the performance
whereof we are bound. Hence, to give alms, and to do
righteousness and justice, are often in Scripture put the
one for the other, both signifying the same thing: there-
fore, the Septuagint has the Hebrew word signifying
righteousness, in Deut. xxiv. 13, rendered "alms-deed;"
and in Ps. cxii. 9, it is said: "His righteousness endureth
for ever;" that is, his alms or his mercifulness; as is clear
from the foregoing words: "He hath dispersed, he hath
given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever:"
whereby is implied, that giving of alms is one special
branch of that righteousness and justice we owe to our poor
neighbours. And darest thou yet hold it in thy hand?
Wilt thou wrong the Almighty of his right, and rob the
poor of their due. If it be nothing with thee to be unmer-
cifull, is it nothing to be a robber—a robber of God?
"Will a man rob God?" (Mal. iii. 8.)—dares any man be
so wicked? How can you but expect that he will make a
forcible entry upon thee, and take what is his own, and
seal a writ of ejectment against thee, and turn thee out of all thou hast? Look not to be long in quiet possession of what thou hast; but fear lest either God should take thine estate from thee, or thee from thine estate; and give thee thy portion with Dives, who because he denied his crumbs to satisfy the hunger of poor Lazarus, was himself denied a drop of cold water to quench his own heat and thirst. (Luke xvi. 23, 26.) Upon which words, St. Austin thus remarketh: “Therefore was not Dives heard, when he prayed in torments, because he hearkened not to the poor that begged of him when he was upon earth.”

Let me add a few quickening words to carry home what has been spoken by the following questions:—

**Quest. I.** Now, at length, what dost thou think of mercy and bounty to the poor?

1. Is there not an excellency in it? Oh, how much of God there is in it, there is faith in it: he that will cast his bread upon the water, is it not a sure sign that he believes God, who hath said that it shall be returned again? There is the love of God in it: “Whoso seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” And he that openeth his bowels, and draws forth his soul to God’s hungry ones, who can deny but the love of God dwelleth in that man? It is the image of God’s goodness. God is a merciful God, and his mercy is his glory, and this glory of God shineth forth in his merciful servants. There is self-denial in it: self would keep all, flesh would hold back,—it cannot spare for God; it is a sign that self is laid low, that the flesh is kept under, that the interest of God is the swaying interest, when, whatever God will have, this self is not suffered to keep back. Is there so much
of God in mercifulness, and is there not an excellency in it?

2. Is there not a necessity for it? Shall the merciless ever obtain mercy? Canst thou hope for mercy who wilt shew no mercy?

**Quest. II.** What dost thou think of thyself? Art thou merciful or merciless? How dost thou find it, is thine heart open, are thy bowels open, or are they still shut? Dost thou feel that heart of thine inclined and resolved to open thy hands, and to disperse, and that liberally, the good things thou hast received, as a good steward of the manifold gifts of God? or, dost thou yet feel that the door is shut, thine heart is hardened against shewing kindness to the Lord? Give thy plain judgment, what thinkest thou? Art thou a merciful man or merciless; and if merciless, how dost thou hope to obtain mercy?

**Quest. III.** What dost thou think of thy worldly goods?

1. Are they not thy talents committed to thee for thy Lord’s use? Must thou not be accountable to him how they have been laid out? Will it be a comfortable account, when thou must bring in thy bill,—so much for thy pride, so much for thine appetite, or all hoarded up for thy covetousness, and nothing, or but little, for God?

2. Are they worth more than treasures in heaven? Is it more to thine advantage to be rich in this world’s goods than to be rich in good works? Dost thou in good earnest judge, that thy laying up treasures in earth is better husbandry than thy laying up in store for thyself a good foundation against the time to come?

**Quest. IV.** What dost thou think of the state of many of the servants of God in this age? Are there no wanting ones—no distressed ones? what, neither amongst ministers
nor christians, are they all provided for—do not many of them eat the bread and drink the waters of affliction? Is it not very strait and very short with them? Do but inquire after their condition, and thou wilt find it so. Art thou one of those who care not how it fares with the poor friends of Christ? Are they not worth the inquiring and looking after? or at least, is not he worthy whose they are, and whom they serve? Is not Christ worthy, for whose sake thou shouldst shew kindness to his? How will he take thy neglect of them? remember that word: (Matt. xxv. 45.) "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

**Quest. V.** What wilt thou do for the future? What shall be the success of these few words that are written for thy learning? What art thou resolved upon—mercy or cruelty? consult thine own heart: lay not by this little book, until thou art come to a resolution one way or other, either to accept or to reject this counsel, which in the name of the Lord is offered thee for thy good. Oh, shew thyself, a man in whose soul Christ hath an interest; and so great an interest that thou wilt do anything at his word; pity at his word—relieve at his word—give, lend, feed, clothe, refresh the bowels of his needy ones. Let thy soul say, Lord, at thy word I will do it: here's my bread, and my flesh, and my money, command what thou wilt of it, I will not say thee nay. Thou hast given me a large portion, and every one of thy servants that thou appointest to receive it, shall have their part: for thy sake, Lord, they shall have it. Thine I am, and thine is all that I have, shew me thy pleasure, how much, and how often, and where, and to whom I shall bestow it; and through the grace of God there it shall go.
Friend, wilt thou say thus? Wilt thou in the presence of the Lord come to this gracious resolution, or canst thou yet find in thine heart to deny thy Lord, and continue to be as hard-hearted and close-handed as thou wast wont to be. Dare not to say, Lord, my goods are mine own, I owe thee nothing. Dread such a thought, that how much soever thou hast, the servants of Christ shall be nothing the better for it.

Once again, consider, thou art put to this choice, either to accept of the counsel of Christ or to reject it: which of the two wilt thou do? If thou resolvest not on mercy and liberality, thou rejectest the word of the Lord; and if thou rejectest his word, thou rejectest the Lord, and therein sayest, He shall be no Lord for me. But if thou acceptest, then go and do accordingly; let the hunger, and the thirst, and the nakedness, the wants and distresses of his servants feel by that relief they shall receive from thee, that thou art a man to whom the Lord hath not spoken in vain: let them feel it presently, and let them feel it constantly; this year—and the next year—and the next—even whilst they need to receive, and thou hast it by thee to give. This do, and the Lord accept thee, remember all thy offerings, and accept all thy sacrifices. The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. The Lord remember thee with the favour he beareth unto his children, and visit thee with his salvation.
A SERMON
ON
GOOD WORKS,
IN WHICH SEVERAL CASES OF CONSCIENCE CONCERNING
ALMS-GIVING ARE RESOLVED.

THE APOSTLE'S CHARGE CONCERNING RICH MEN,
TO BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-
minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth
us richly all things to enjoy.
That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute,
willing to communicate;
Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time
to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."—(1 Tim. vi.
17, 18, 19.)

The sum of these words is, a direction for rich men, how
to make the best use of their riches; the ground or occasion
of this direction is, to meet an objection which might be
made against the disadvantage and danger of riches spoken
of in verses 9, 10. "But they that will be rich fall into temp-
tation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts,
drawn men in destruction and perdition. For the
love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." From hence some might infer, as the disciples did from the inseparable and inviolable bond of marriage, noted by our Saviour, (Matt. xix. 10.) "If" say they, "the case of the man be thus with his wife, it is not good to marry." So might some say, "if they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare," &c., then it is not good to be rich; yea, such as are rich might say "Let us give away, or cast away all that we have, rather than retain such vipers as riches seem to be."

To prevent such unsound inferences, the apostle giveth this direction, whereby he sheweth that riches may be well used, and being well used may be a means of helping on our eternal salvation. Learn hence not to condemn things good in themselves, because of the abuse of them. Our Lord, in regard of the ordinary abuse of riches, styleth them "mammon of unrighteousness," and yet, doth not advise us therefore to cast them away, but to make to ourselves friends thereof, (Luke xvi. 9.) that is, so to use them, that the good works done by them, may as friends before the judge, give evidence of the truth of our faith and love, and shew that we are of the sheep of Christ, for whom eternal life is purchased.

Having thus shewn the occasion and dependance of those words upon the former, we now come to the logical resolution of them, where we may observe two parts:

I. A prohibition.

II. An injunction.

A prohibition of hurtful vices; an injunction of needful virtues.
The vices are two:
1. High-mindedness.
2. Vain confidence.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches."

The virtues are likewise two:
1. Confidence or faith in God, "but trust in God," which is urged by an argument taken from God's bounty, in these words, "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."
2. Charity towards men, expressed in several phrases, viz., by doing good, and by being rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; which duties are enforced by an argument taken from the benefit of performing them, which is in brief an assurance of eternal life, implied in those words: "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

I shall speak briefly on the several branches of the text, as they lie in order; and then come to the question or case of conscience brought before our notice: "Charge them that are rich in this world." The expression of the apostle is here remarkable, in that he saith not, speak to them, nor declare unto them, but charge—command them. Well did the apostle know how forward on one side rich men are to be high-minded, and to trust in their riches; and on the other how backward they are to trust in God, and to shew charity to the poor. And thereupon he saw it requisite, that a minister should take courage to himself, and not think it enough closely to intimate to rich men what vices they are addicted to, or what virtues they are bound unto, but remembering the place wherein they stand,
which is God's, in the name of his most excellent Majesty
to require, charge, and command them to forbear the one
and endeavour after the other.

In the next place follow the parties to whom this charge
is to be given: namely, the rich in this world. "Charge
them," saith the apostle, "that are rich in this world,"
that is in this present world, denoting riches to be only for
this world: for that proverb of the wise man is true,
"Riches are not for ever." (Prov, xxvii. 24.) They
cannot be carried out of this world: as we came naked into
this world, so naked shall we go out of it. (Job i. 21.) And
therefore, it must needs be a point of great wisdom, by
that which is but for this present world, to store up a sure
foundation for the time to come.

In the next place follow, the vices here forbidden; the
first is high-mindedness, whereunto rich men are very
prone. Their wealth is as wind: now though wind be but
a vapour, yet it puffeth up exceedingly, as we see in a
bladder filled with wind; in like manner, riches, though
they be but mere vanity, as the wise man expresseth it,
(Eccles. i. 2.) yet are they apt to puff up men extremely,
even to think of themselves above what is meet. Whereas,
if rich men would but weigh that they came from, and
must return to, the same earth that others do, for dust they
are and unto dust must they return, (Gen. iii. 19)—yea,
if they would but consider, that they came from the same
cursed stock that others do, and are by nature no better
than the meanest; especially if they would consider, that
outward riches cannot add the least atom of real worth to
the owners of them; and that though they may be the
more honourable parts or members of the civil body of
state, yet, in the mystical body of Christ, they may be less
honourable than the poor. I say, if rich men did but seriously consider these things, they would not be so high-minded as they are.

The other vice here forbidden unto rich men, is vain confidence, or trusting in their riches,—and this is very fitly joined to the former, for where our pride is, there will be our confidence. That rich men are apt to put too much trust and confidence in their riches, doth appear by the titles which they commonly give unto them—calling them their goods, as if they were the only good things; and their substance, as if all things else were shadows; and by the increase of them, they say they are made for ever,—and by the loss of them, they say they are utterly undone. What do these expressions imply, but a trust and confidence in their riches; whereupon, saith the Wise Man: "The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." (Prov. xvii. 11.) It makes him think himself so safe and secure, that like the judge mentioned by our Saviour, he feareth not God neither regardeth man. (Luke xviii. 2.)

In the next place follow the virtues enjoined—

The first is confidence, or faith in God, which is directly opposed to trust in riches, so that rich men may have wherein to trust, though they trust not in riches. God is the God of the rich as well as of the poor; and the one as well as the other are to put their whole trust in him.

And if we consider the attribute here given to God, viz., living—"but trust in the living God," we shall see good reason to trust in God, rather than in riches: for our wealth may vanish away, but he ever liveth; our wealth may prove our bane, but he is both the giver and preserver of life. Our trusting in God is here pressed by an argu-
ment taken from God's bounty to us, in these words: "Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." So that the Lord is not only a living, but also a giving God, of whose gift you have, not only your life, but also your riches—yea, all that you have is the gift of God, who giveth you not only all needful things, but also richly; and as St. James saith, liberally. (James i. 5.) God in his gifts sheweth himself to be a God, and that in two ways:

1. **By the freeness.**

2. **By the greatness of them.**—He loadeth us with benefits. (Ps. lxviii. 19.) This rich bounty of God is a further motive to draw you to trust in him. Yea, the apostle addeth that the Lord "giveth us richly all things to enjoy," that is, not only for the present to spend, as being absolutely necessary, but also to lay up and reserve, so that it is not unlawful to lay up for after years; the apostle presseth it upon parents as a bounden duty, to lay up for their children. (2 Cor. xii. 14.) Only let this lawful liberty be limited with these and similar bounds.

1. That we lay up nothing but what is justly obtained. To lay up riches of unrighteousness is to kindle a fire that may destroy both our temporal and our spiritual estate.

2. That we be not so covetous of hoarding up, as to deny ourselves what is needful for our use and comfort, or to deny the poor what is needful and necessary for them: but that we willingly give out both what is meet for ourselves, and what is needful for the poor.

3. That in our treasuring up, we aim not merely, wholly and only, at ourselves, but withal have an eye to the charge which in particular God hath committed to us, and also to the church, commonwealth, and poor, for the time to come.
4. That we exceed not measure in our treasure, even though we aim at the fore-mentioned good ends.

So much for the clearing the first duty which the apostle would have pressed upon rich men especially, which is to trust in God.

The second is charity towards men expressed in several phrases, as first, doing good, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good." So that true charity consisteth not only in compassionate affections and kind speeches, but in good deeds, as the word in the original implieth. You rich men ought to "be rich in good works," as the apostle addeth, for God expecteth fruit answerable to the seed which he soweth,—he giveth you plenty of seed, therefore you must be plentiful in this kind of fruit.

The next clauses, "ready to distribute, willing to communicate," set forth the manner of our charity: the former implying a wise distribution of our alms, for to distribute is not hand over head without consideration to give, but according to the need of them to whom we give, the latter implying a willingness therein. As by distributing, good is done to others, so by willingness therein, much comfort is brought to our souls, and grace to the work, and God doth best accept such, for he loveth a cheerful giver. (2 Cor. ix. 7.)

In the next place follow the reasons for enforcing the fore-named duties, taken from the benefit of performing them, which is in brief, an assurance of eternal life, implied in these words: "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." The apostle here for their greater encouragement to lay out a portion of their estate on good works, telleth them that they are so far from losing what
they thus lay out, that in truth they thereby lay up in store for themselves—yea, they lay up a good foundation; that is, such a treasure as is like a foundation in the ground that cannot be shaken or overthrown. This treasure the apostle thus expresseth, in opposition to the fore-mentioned uncertainty of riches. So that by a cheerful distribution of this world's wealth, they do indeed but exchange uncertainties for certainties, and so no fear of losing by such bargains—yea, they thereby obtain eternal life.

**Quest.** Are then good works the cause of eternal life?

**Ans.** Surely not, only they are the means and way of attaining thereto; and in this sense is this phrase here used, "That they may lay hold on eternal life."

Having thus shewn you the occasion of the words, the logical resolution of them, and their sense and meaning, I should now, according to my accustomed method, come to such points of doctrine as the words do naturally afford unto us; but I must waive them, and turn to that question or case of conscience which arises from this subject, viz.:

**Quest.** How, or after what manner, must we give alms, that they may be acceptable and pleasing unto God? In resolving this question, I shall endeavour to answer most of the cases of conscience about alms-giving.

**Ans.** It must be done.

I. With justice, giving only of our own, whereunto we have a just right and title, this our Saviour implieth in that precept of his, (Luke xi. 41.) where he saith, "Give alms of such things as ye have," whereby is not meant such things as a man hath by him (for he may have another man's things by him,) but such things as are his own; whereunto he hath a just title, and undoubted right; whereof he, as the lawful proprietor, hath the power of
disposing—those things, and those only, may be lawfully and justly give away.

This caution is very necessary for many reasons.

1. Because otherwise we shall sever mercy from justice, which should always go hand in hand: God hath put them together, (Prov. xxii. 21.—Dan. iv. 27.) and we must not put them asunder, indeed they are two links of one and the same chain, of which other virtues and graces are also other links, so many virtues, so many links. Now if one link of a chain falls off, the whole chain is broken, and down falls that which is drawn or held up by it: so we, that are held out of the pit of destruction by the chain of graces, are in danger of falling into it, if one grace be violated, and severed from the rest.

2. By giving that which is not our own, the excellency and glory of charity is lost, of such charity it may be said, Ichabod, where is the glory? (1 Sam. iv. 21.) The glory of charity consists in this, that we are willing to part with our own, for the relief and succour of others.

3. By giving that which is not our own, we do wrong and thereby make ourselves liable to restitution, so that charity in such a case, is a plain injury. It is a case wherein a recompense of revenge may more be feared than a recompense of reward be expected.

**Quest.** Who may be said to give that which is not their own?

**Ans.** 1. They who cheat, steal or rob for this very end, as parents for children, and children for parents, or one friend for another. It is a sin, for one to steal to satisfy his own hunger, much more is it a sin to steal for another: certainly, it is a great wickedness to do injustice, that we may do acts of charity.
2. Such as having raised up an estate, or got something by indirect and unjust means, as by lying, swearing, false weights, deceitful measures, and the like, think to make up all, by giving part to the poor: but, as the civilians say well, "the good use doth not justify the unjust getting of goods." And can any imagine that God will be pleased with those men's charity who give relief out of that which they have unlawfully gotten? Restitution should rather be made to such as have been wronged; and if neither the parties wronged nor their heirs can be found, then what hath been wrongfully got, ought to be given to the poor, as their heirs. An example of this we have in Zaccheus, (Luke xix. 8.) who having wronged many by oppression, after his conversion, offered four-fold restitution unto all whom he had wronged; and because many could not be found to whom he should make it, he offered to bestow half of his goods to the relief of the poor.

3. Such as being under authority, and having no right in the things which they give, do notwithstanding, give directly against, or simply without the consent of those who have the true right,—do not give of their own, as servants, children and others. Servants and children may indeed lawfully give out of that which is their own; but not out of that which is their master's or parent's, without their allowance.

4. Such as being joined in partnership with another, and give alms out of the common stock, without the consent of their partners, do not give that which is their own.

5. Such as are in extreme debt, and owe more than they are worth. We shewed that mercy and justice must go together: yea, justice must go before mercy, and be satisfied before mercy be shewed. They who owe more
than they are worth, have nothing at all to give for alms, such join arrogance to injustice, to make shew of a great estate, and yet have none.

I shall close this with a word of advice to such as have a merciful and charitable disposition, above their outward condition and ability. That they use the best diligence they can, by all lawful and warrantable means, to get something to bestow upon charitable uses. Let poor labouring men take so much the more pains, that they may have somewhat to give; let servants spare out of their wages; let such as have no property at all, but are wholly maintained by those under whom they live, as children, apprentices, and others, do what they can to obtain something from their parents or other governors, even for this very end, that they may have something to give; let such as are in debt, first pay their debts, and then give alms; let such as have any way defrauded others, first make restitution, and then relieve them that are in need; lastly let such as live to the extent of their estate, and much more such as live beyond their means, well weigh wherein they may cut off some of their expenses to bestow on the poor.

II. Alms-giving must be done with freedom and cheerfulness, and not grudgingly, the phrase of giving alms, frequently mentioned in Scripture, implieth as much, for to give, is freely to bestow. In the law this quality of giving, is plainly expressed, and by the contrary thus explained, "Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him," (Deut. xv. 10.) it is also implied under this phrase, "Thou shalt open thine hand wide." (v. 11.) Alms must not be wrested and wrung out of a man's hand, but he must of himself open his hand, that is, freely give: the word wide addeth
emphasis. And in the gospel, we find it commanded by the apostle: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. ix. 7.)

Many motives may be produced to induce us hereunto:
as,

1. The pattern of God, our Heavenly Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

All the good that the Father doth, he doth most freely; who hath first given unto him? The word which is used to set forth that which God giveth (Rom. v. 15.) signifieth a free gift; and he is said to love us freely, (Hos. xiv. 4.) to justify us freely, (Rom. iii. 24.) and freely to give us all things. (Rom. viii. 32.)

This reason of God's love, the Lord set his love upon you, because he loved you, (Deut. vii. 7, 8.) doth clearly demonstrate the freeness of it.

The good also which the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Saviour doth for us, he doth most freely, upon his own love, and without any desert of ours. In this respect it is said, that he hath "loved us, and hath given himself for us." (Eph. v. 2, 25.) The conjunction of these two, love and giving, plainly prove the freeness of the gift. But further, he expressly saith, concerning the freeness of his gift, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely," (Rev. xxi. 6.) and again: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (ch. xxii. 17.)

2. A second motive may be taken from the nature of charity, which unless it be free, is not true and sound,—this much the apostle implieth under this phrase: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not
charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Cor. xiii. 3.) By charity he meaneth a free giving of that which is given, merely out of love and pity to him unto whom he giveth.

3. Free giving makes that which is given to man, acceptable to God, for “God loveth a cheerful giver,” (2 Cor. ix. 7.) yea, God hath more respect to the manner of giving, than to the greatness of the gift: “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” (chap. viii. 12.)

4. A free manner of giving makes the gift the more acceptable to him that is made partaker thereof. As the gift supplieth his want, so the manner of giving reviveth his spirit. The apostle rejoiced in the Lord greatly, for that care which the Philippians shewed to him in his necessity. (Phil. iv. 10.)

5. A free and cheerful giving much redoundeth to the glory of God, in that others are stirred up to praise God for such gifts. David praised God’s glorious name, when he saw his people offer willingly unto the Lord. (1 Chron. xxix. 13, 14.) And in this respect the apostle saith of such benevolence, that it is abundant by many thanksgivings unto God. (2 Cor. ix. 12.)

III. With simplicity and sincerity: according to that exhortation of the apostle: “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity,” (Rom. xii. 8.) that is, with an honest, plain, and sincere heart, not aiming therein at his own praise or applause, but at the glory of God, doing it in obedience to his command. This simplicity in giving, our Saviour hinteth unto us when he saith, “When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth,” (Matt. vi. 3.) that is, let not the nearest that may
be unto thee know what thou givest. The right hand is that hand wherewith we ordinarily give, yet the left hand is often assistant to it: now though there should be any so near unto thee, as to be helpful and assistant, or at hand, yet let them not know it, make known thy charity to none.

**Quest.** May we not give alms if others be by?

**Ans.** Yes, if it be needful, as at public collections, or when in public we see one stand in need. But we may not do it with the intention of having it known, our mind must be free from all such conceit, and we must do it as if we were alone. "That alms is not unacceptable which is given and seen of men; but that which is given to be seen of men." So that the scope of our Saviour in the forementioned place is, to take us off from vain-glory, in giving our alms, that inasmuch as in us lieth we should endeavour to hide and conceal our good works from the eye of the world.

IV. Our alms must be given with a compassionate heart, with bowels of affection. The Greek word for alms is derived from a word that signifies mercy, which intimateth the disposition of the giver—how he should be a merciful man, whose bowels are moved at the misery of another, and thereupon contributes to his need with bowels of compassion. In giving, we must not only open our hands, but also our hearts, in pity and compassion—we must draw out our own souls (as the prophet speaketh) as well as our purses to the hungry and afflicted, (Isa. lviii. 10.) which is implied under several expressions on charity, used in Scripture by the Holy Ghost, as: "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he." (Prov. xiv. 21.) And again: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord."
GOOD WORKS.

(chap. xix. 17.) And the apostle Paul saith: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies." (Col. iii. 12.) And the beloved disciple St. John saith: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17.) It is not enough to have an open liberal hand, unless we have also an open and compassionate heart, for if the sacrifice of our alms-deeds be not mingled with the oil and incense of mercy and compassion, it will not be acceptable unto God, who will have mercy as well as sacrifice. In contributing therefore, to the relief of the poor, let our inward affection go along with our outward action.

As helps hereunto:

1. Be well-informed in the benefit that compassion bringeth, and that not only to thy distressed brother who is succoured, but also to thyself, to whom in this case a promise of mercy is made: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy," (Matt. v. 7.)—mercy from other men, and mercy from God himself.

2. Weigh well the common condition of all, how "All things come alike to all," as the Wise Man speaketh, (Eccles. ix. 2.) so that thou also art subject to the same distress whereunto others are brought; and therefore as Aquinas saith: we should have compassion on other men's misery, "for the possibility of suffering the like." Which argument the apostle useth to the Hebrews, saying, remember them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body; that is, say some, as being members of the same body, but rather as Beza and others interpret the place, as being yourselves in the body of flesh and frailty, subject to the like miseries; for so long as we dwell here in
these houses of clay, and carry about this earthly taber-
nacle, we are all subject to the like changes and chances:
which made the old, learned Theodoret reach his helping
hand to those outcast Africans: "For when I saw," saith
he, "their pitiful estate, I began to lay to heart the
doubtful turnings and inversions of human things, and to
fear lest I myself might fall into the like evils."

V. Our alms must be given seasonably; for as the Wise
Man speaketh, "To everything there is a time," and
everything is beautiful only in its time and season; (Eccles.
iii. 1, 11.) therefore it will be our wisdom, so to observe
the needs and necessities of other men, that we do not let
slip any season or opportunity of doing good: according to
that exhortation of the apostle, as we have therefore oppor-
tunity let us do good. (Gal. vi. 10.) The word in the
original, which is translated "opportunity," properly sig-
nifies a seasonable time.

Quest. Which are the most seasonable times for doing
works of mercy?

Ans. 1. When, accidentally, thou meetest with any fit
objects of mercy, thou must not then pass them by with
the priest and Levite; (Luke x. 31–34.) but with the
good Samaritan, presently pour the oil and wine of thy
charity into the wounds of thy brother, forthwith contribu-
ting somewhat to his relief; for misery being the proper
object of charity, thou shouldst then extend thy mercy unto
such as are in want and misery.

2. When God, by his providence, hath any way blessed
and increased thy stock and store, by prospering thy
adventure at sea, or thy trading at home, or by some great
legacy bequeathed thee by some of thy friends, that is a
seasonable time for thee to give out freely and liberally to
the relief of the poor, in testimony of thy thankfulness unto God for his bounty towards thee. I know it is usual with most men, upon the increase of their stock and store, to sacrifice to their own nets—to ascribe their wealth to their own wit and policy, and to say in their hearts, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth:" (Deut. viii. 17.) but mark what Moses saith in the next verse, "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." Seeing, therefore, what thou hast thou hast received from God, whatsoever the means and instruments were of conveying it unto thee, is it not most just and equal, that in way of thankfulness thou shouldst set apart some portion thereof for the poor and needy?

3. The Lord's day is another seasonable time of doing works of mercy, according to the apostle's rule and direction: "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) Where, by the first day of the week is meant the Lord's day, on which the apostle enjoineth the Corinthians to lay up something in store, implying thereby, that that is a very fit season, not only to do such works of mercy as are then offered to us, but also to prepare for other times.

4. Days of thanksgiving for some eminent mercy, are another seasonable time for doing works of mercy. The remembering the poor at such times is expressly commanded in Scripture: "Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow." (Deut. xvi. 14.) Here
A SERMON ON

the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, are commanded to rejoice on their days of feasting, which presupposeth the rich men's sending portions of their good cheer unto them, and this was the practice of the people of God, as appeareth by that command of Nehemiah to the Jews, on a day of thanksgiving: "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared," (Neh. viii. 10.) And their day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from Haman's conspiracy, is called, "a day of feasting, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor." (Esth. ix. 22.) And what more seasonable time can there be for shewing mercy to the poor, than when we are blessing God, for his manifold mercies bestowed upon us?

5. Days of fasting and prayer are another seasonable time for doing works of mercy; for how can we expect that God should shew mercy unto us, in removing those judgments which we feel, or in preventing those which we fear, if we will not shew mercy to our poor brethren, who stand in need of our relief? In the day of our fasting, therefore, let us at least, give away to the poor so much as we save by our fast; for as St. Austin in one of his sermons saith, "Then are our fasts acceptable to God, if they which fast out of necessity, (because they want meat) be relieved by us." Let this, therefore, be always observed by us, that the poor have the gain of our fasting, and not our own purses.

VI. Our alms must be given readily and speedily, without any needless delay, according to the counsel of the Wise Man: "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due," (Prov. iii. 27.) that is, withhold not any act of charity from those who stand in need of thy help. "Say not unto thy
GOOD WORKS.

neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.” He that so delayeth his helping hand, is next door to him that denieth; and therefore, as any occasion offers itself unto us, let us speedily embrace the same, as knowing that a speedy giver is a double benefactor, and the swifter that a benefit cometh, the sweeter it tastes; and contrariwise, a benefit loseth its grace, that sticketh to the fingers of him who is about to bestow it. What, then, shall we think of their charity, who put off all to their death-beds, never giving anything considerable to the poor, till they can keep it no longer? Though these by their last will and testament give somewhat to the poor, yet questionless it is against their wills; for could they have kept it longer, they would not have parted with it.

I shall desire such seriously to consider these six things:

1. That if all rich men should do thus, the poor would soon be starved, for want of bread.

2. That this practice of theirs is against the express command of God, who requireth us to do good, and to communicate out of our store, whilst we have time and opportunity.

3. That they have no assurance of the continuance of their wealth; for, as the Wise Man speaketh: “Riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.” They have eagle’s wings to fly from us; and how many are there who have outlived a good estate? If God in his displeasure blasts a man’s substance, it vanisheth away in a moment.

4. Though their riches should continue with them, even to their deaths, yet they have no assurance that God will
give them grace to be liberal at their deaths, who had never the goodness to be charitable in their life-time.

5. That they have no assurance that God will accept of their death-bed charity. What St. Austin saith of death-bed repentance, that "It is seldom true and hearty," the same I may say of death-bed charity, it is seldom true and hearty; but for the most part rotten and hypocritical, proceeding from ill grounds, as vain-glory, conceit of merit, and the like.

6. That they have no assurance of the true performance of their will, that the poor shall be the better for what is thereby given them; for how many executors have proved unfaithful to their trusts, whereby many charitable gifts have been entirely perverted? And if friends be so unfaithful unto us in our lifetime, how can we but question their fidelity after our deaths? Oh therefore, that all whom the Lord hath blessed with an estate, would in their life-time become their own administrators, making (as one saith) their own hands their executors, and their own eyes their overseers: for questionless, that charity which is exercised in a man's lifetime is the best and most acceptable unto God.

VII. Our alms must be bountiful and liberal, giving out proportionably to what the Lord hath given unto us. This is implied in that command of God to his people "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land," (Deut. xv. 11.) that is, thou shalt give unto him bountifully and liberally. And our apostle here in the text, would have rich men charged to be rich in good works, even as God had given them all things richly to enjoy. (1 Tim. xvi. 18.) "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much re-
quired:” (Luke xii. 48.) and therefore, the same apostle adviseth the Corinthians to give “As God hath prospered them.” (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) To whom God hath given little of this world’s goods, of them he requireth but little; but to whom he hath given much, of them he requireth much. Rich men therefore, must not only give a portion of their wealth for the relief of others, but also in some fit proportion to their estate.

**Quest.** If any shall ask what is that portion or proportion of estate which rich men ought to set apart for charitable uses?

**Ans.** It is a hard matter to determine the quantity and proportion of men’s charity, the Scriptures being silent herein, leaving this to the discretion and ingenuity of the prudent christian: as the apostle speaketh, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give,” &c. (2 Cor. ix. 7.) A certain quantity is not set him, that is left to the free purpose of his own heart.

But though the Scripture giveth us no direct precept in this particular, it holdeth forth many precedents for our imitation; as that of Jacob, who in testimony of his thankfulness unto God, for what he should bestow upon him, vowed the tenth part thereof unto God for pious and charitable uses: “And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” (Gen. xxviii. 20, 22.) Of Cornelius it is recorded, that he gave “much alms.” (Acts x. 2.) And the Macedonians (2 Cor. viii. 3.) are highly commended for their great bounty and large contributions. These examples are left upon record for our imitation: for as the apostle speaketh: “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, and for our admonition,” (Rom. xv. 4.—
1 Cor. x. 11.) so that though the quantity of our alms, how much we should give, is not expressly set down; yet this we find both commanded and commended, by precepts and precedents, in the Scriptures that we give liberally and bountifully, in some fit proportion to our estates: that if we be rich in this world's goods, we should then be rich in good works; sowing bountifully, that so we may reap also bountifully. (2 Cor. ix. 6.) Now that our alms may be liberal, it must be fitted to two things, viz.,

1. The necessity of the receiver.
2. The ability of the giver.

That in our giving we should have respect to the need and necessity of our brother, the law is clear which saith: "If there be among you a poor man, one of thy brethren, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth." That we should likewise have respect to our own ability, the apostle Peter is as clear, where he saith, "If any man minister let him do it as of the ability which God giveth;" that is, let every one give with respect to his own estate and ability. Notwithstanding, in cases of urgent necessity and great extremity, we are to strain ourselves, even above our ability.

Here it may not be amiss to answer another question, (for I resolve to contrive all I have to deliver on this subject into this plain and easy method,) and that is this:

**Quest.** How many ways may rich men exercise their charity?

**Ans.** I. By laying out a portion of their estate, in such a way as directly tends to the worship of God, the advancement of religion, and the salvation of men's souls, which I
GOOD WORKS.

may not unfitly term a spiritual charity. And this may be done in several ways, as:

1. By contributing towards the planting and propagating the gospel where it hath not been. A work set on foot by divers in New England, but chiefly carried on by the charity of well-disposed people here in Old England.

2. By setting up, and maintaining of lectures: the preaching of the word being the ordinary means appointed by God for bringing sinners to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. (Rom. i. 16.)

3. By adding to the maintenance of such settled preachers whose pains are great, and means small, through the covetousness of impro priators who engross to themselves what doth more properly belong to the minister.

4. By maintaining poor scholars at the university, in reference to the work of the ministry, that so there may be a continual supply of learned, godly, and orthodox ministers, for the edifying the body of Christ.

5. By bestowing Bibles on poor children, whereby, through the care of their parents, they may be acquainted with the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Memorable is the pious gift of Sir John Fenner, who, by his last will, gave six pounds per annum to several out-parishes in London, for the buying of Bibles, to be distributed amongst poor children. From my own experience I can say, that this gift hath occasioned many poor people to teach their children to read, that so they might be able to have one of those Bibles, which are to be given only to such as can in some measure read.

6. By erecting country schools, and endowing them with some competent maintenance, for teaching poor men's
children, who have not wherewith to pay for their schooling: which will be a special means, not only to further their civil, but also their spiritual education, for thereby they will be made more capable of divine instruction. Experience teacheth us how ineffectual the most powerful ministry is upon an ignorant and unlearned congregation. Without doubt therefore, the erecting country schools, is a work of charity, more noble in itself, more acceptable unto God, and more beneficial to the kingdom than the building alms-houses, which are too often filled with swarms of idle drones. But though this spiritual charity is questionless the more excellent, as tending to a more excellent object, namely, the souls of our neighbours, yet the bodies of our neighbours must be cared for as well as their souls: our charity therefore must also extend to them, and in this way it may be practised:

1. By a free and liberal giving to the relief of those who are in want, of which I have already largely spoken.

2. By a ready lending to such as being in a calling, want stock or other means to help themselves in their trades. This duty of lending we find expressly commanded both in the law and in the gospel. In the law, at the place before quoted: "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth." (Deut. xv. 8.) In the gospel, our Saviour saith, "Lend, hoping for nothing again;" that is, lend not only to such from whom you may hope, by reason of their ability, to receive your own again; but also to such, as by reason of their poverty, may perhaps never be able to repay you. The Psalmist maketh this a sign of a good man, that "He is ever merciful and lendeth;" and that he "sheweth favour and lendeth." (Ps. xxxvii. 26;
Here we see it is set down as the character of such a man, that he is ready to lend to the poor, to such as stand in need of his help, and that freely without hope of gain.

This duty belongeth especially to rich men, because the wants of him that would borrow, usually require more than meaner persons can well spare—they can better give a penny, than lend a pound, though in many cases the lending our brother a considerable sum together, would be more beneficial to him than it would be to give him half as much: there is therefore a very noble and very generous act of charity to be exercised this way; and it is peculiar to rich men, who have by them wherewith to do it.

3. Rich men may and ought to express their charity, by forgiving a debt, in case the borrower be not able to repay it.

There are many who, by the help of that which is lent them, (God blessing their pains in the employment thereof) are able to repay what is lent. If there were not hope thereof, men would rather give, than lend to such.

But there are others who, notwithstanding their care and pains in their calling, thrive not; or by some accident suffer such loss and damage, that they are not able to repay what they have borrowed. In such cases, creditors are bound to forgive (at least to forbear) their debtors. This is the intent of that charge: "Lend, hoping for nothing again." (Luke v. 35.) To take this phrase simply, is to alter the nature of lending, and to turn it into giving. Herein lieth the difference between lending, and giving; lending, is on condition of having again that which is lent, or at least the worth of it some other way: giving, is free, without any such condition. That advice of Christ
to "Lend, hoping for nothing again," hath respect to the mind of the lender, that he should not have his mind wholly and only upon the repayment of what he lendeth; but on the need of his brother. He is not simply to lend, because he is persuaded he shall lose nothing, but have his own again: he is to lend, because he doth thereby a great kindness to his brother, who stands in much need thereof.

The Greek word properly signifieth "to despair," and so it may here be taken; as if he had said, When your brother hath need to borrow, lend, though his case be such that you even despair of receiving it again, and though you run some hazard of losing the principal.

If, therefore, it so fall out, that the debtor be not able to repay what he borrowed, forgive it him. He lends, hoping for nothing again, who is willing to forgive, in case the necessity of the borrower require it. This was what Nehemiah enjoined upon the rich Jews. (Neh. v. 11.) Excellently doth our Lord press this duty in the parable of the two creditors, where we have a commendable pattern of a certain king, who in such case forgave a great debt; and of the severe revenge he executed on one of his servants, because he did not in like manner forgive his fellow-servant. (Matt. xvii. 23.) In the Old Testament, it is commended to us under the phrase of restoring the pledge." (Ezek. xviii. 7; xxxiii. 15; Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18.) A pledge was a pawn left by a debtor with his creditor, for assurance of repaying the debt; restoring the pledge when the debt was not paid, was an evidence of remitting the debt.

4. By hospitality, which consisteth not so much in a loving entertainment of kindred, friends, and neighbours, as of strangers, as the word in the Greek importeth. This
is that hospitality, which is both commanded and commended to us in the Holy Scriptures: It is commanded in those well-known precepts of the apostle Paul: "Be given to hospitality," and "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers," (Rom. xii. 13; Heb. xiii. 2.) which is as much as to say, forget not hospitality, which is an entertaining of strangers. And the apostle Peter commands the faithful to whom he writes, to use hospitality without grudging or repining. (1 Pet. iv. 9.) It is commended to us in the practice of God's people; as in the case of Abraham, of whom it is recorded, that he sat at his tent door, looking and waiting, as it were, for strangers, to entertain them; and so soon as he saw three men whom he took to be such, he ran to invite them. (Gen. xviii. 1, 3.) And of Lot, that as he sat in the gate of Sodom, he saw two men whom he conceived to be strangers, and he exceedingly pressed them to turn into his house, where he made them a great feast. (Gen. xix. 3.) And of the Shunammite woman and her husband who shewed themselves hospitable to the prophet Elisha, as oft as he passed by their house. (2 Kings iv. 8.) We have Job's testimony of himself: "The stranger," said he, "did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller;" (Job xxxi. 32.) which words shew Job's great hospitality in keeping an open house for all passengers. In those days there was no common inn for the entertainment of strangers, and therefore they must have lain out of doors if some good man had not entertained them.

Having so many and so great precedents of hospitality, let us strive to follow them, labouring to walk in their steps, knowing assuredly that our labour of love and cost therein shall not be in vain. For I may truly say, it is a
fruitful and gainful course of liberality, never did any lose by it, some have hereby entertained angels, as the apostle speaketh, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb. xiii. 2.) In mentioning this recompense the apostle had an especial reference unto two instances, those of Abraham and Lot. (Gen. xviii. 2; xix. 1.) Angels came to both of these, under the appearance of men whom they knew not, which sheweth God's high account of this duty, in that once and again he sent angels to such as were ready to entertain strangers. Yea, we may entertain Christ himself, and indeed in every entertainment of a poor, godly stranger, Christ himself is entertained; and therefore in the great day of judgment we read that Christ puts in this good work by name: "I was a stranger, and ye took me in." (Matt. xxv. 35.) Jesus Christ is a stranger in his members.

In the Sacred Scriptures, we find several others rewarded for their hospitality, as, Rebekah for her courtesy to Abraham's servant, a mere stranger to her, was rewarded with precious gifts and a good husband. (Gen. xxiv. 22, 49.) The Shunammite's hospitality to the prophet (2 Kings iv.) was recompensed with giving her a son, and restoring him to life. The widow of Sarepta's hospitality to the prophet Elijah, in receiving him into her house in a great famine, was rewarded with preserving and increasing her meal and oil; for it is expressly said, that her barrel of meal wasted not, neither did her cruse of oil fail, until the Lord sent plenty of food. (1 Kings xvii. 16.) The hospitality of Gaius towards St. Paul in receiving him into his house, was recompensed with an honourable testimony, which both St. Paul and St. John gave of him. (Rom. xvi. 23; 3 John v. 6.)
Obj. Some may object and say, instead of a godly man, I may haply entertain some dissembling hypocrite, and so lose both my gift and reward?

Ans. 1. Our charity ought to hope the best of every one, of whom we have no evident proof or presumption to the contrary. (1 Cor. xiii. 7.)

2. If we receive a distressed minister in the name of a minister of Christ, or a private, distressed christian, in the name of a righteous man, supposing him to belong to Christ; let him be what he will, we shall neither lose gift nor reward, Christ hath undertaken the payment thereof.

5. Rich men may and ought in some cases to express their charity, even by selling what they have, for the relief of others, according to that command of our Saviour: "Sell that ye have, and give alms." (Luke xii. 33.)

Quest. In what cases must rich men sell their estates, or any part of them for the relief of others?

Ans. 1. When they are extraordinarily called thereunto, as he that asked Christ what he should do to inherit eternal life; Christ said unto him: "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor." (Mark x. 17, 21.) That which the apostles did, in leaving their callings to follow Christ, was equivalent to selling their possessions. (Matt. xix. 27.)

2. When they have defrauded and oppressed others, and are rebuked for that sin, or otherwise brought to repentance for the same, they ought to testify the truth of their repentance, by a full restitution, though it be by parting with their possessions: thus did the Jews after their captivity, restore to their poor brethren, whom they had oppressed with usury, their lands and their houses, &c. (Neh. v. 11, 12.) The instance of Zaccheus tendeth also
to this purpose; who promised to give the half of his goods to the poor. (Luke xix. 8.)

3. When there are such a multitude of indigent persons in the church that the superfluity of such as are rich is not sufficient to relieve them, as in Acts iv. 34, 35. In this case, those christians in the primitive church who "were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

These particular cases, being all of them somewhat extraordinary, do not sanction the Platonical and familistical theory of community of goods. The following arguments, amongst others, may sufficiently confute such a mistake, and evince propriety in lands and possessions to be lawful now in the times of the gospel.

1. In those very times, wherein christians for use had all things common, St. Peter expressly said to Ananias, concerning the lands which he sold: "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts v. 4.) hereby it is manifest that men then had a propriety in goods and lands.

2. The duties prescribed to rich men, in the words of my text, to do good, to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, prove as much.

3. The many admonitions to pay debts, to give tribute, and perform other like duties of justice, imply a propriety of goods.

4. Exhortations also to lend and to sell, prove as much; for men may not lend nor sell that wherein they have not a propriety. (Luke vi. 35; xi. 41.)

5. Prohibitions against stealing, and against all kinds of
injustice, presuppose a propriety. (Eph. iv. 28; 1 Thes. iv. 6.)

Thus I have done with the seventh quality requisite to the right manner of giving alms, which is bounty and liberality, whereon I have somewhat the longer insisted, because it is the principal thing intended in my text, that they which are rich in this world's goods, be rich in good works. I shall add but one more.

VIII. Our alms must be given prudently, with discretion, according to every one's need. It is said of the merciful man: "A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion." (Ps. cxii. 5.) And truly there is a great deal of discretion to be used in the ordering of our charity, by putting a difference between poor and poor; for as one saith, "unadvised giving is the worst kind of losing."

Prudence in alms-giving is commended to us by our Saviour, in this word distribute, "Distribute unto the poor:" (Luke xviii. 22.) for to distribute, is with discretion to give to sundry persons several portions according to their need. When mention is made of a prudent and discreet relieving the poor, it is thus expressed: "Distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts iv. 35.)

For the better performing this due discretion in our charity, let the following rules be observed:

1. They are before others to be relieved, over whom we have a special charge, as those who are of our household, of our own house and family, as wife, children, and servants: for as the apostle speaketh: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.)
2. In our charity, we ought to have a special respect unto our poor kindred, for of those is the fore-mentioned place (1 Tim. v. 8.) to be understood, where the word in the Greek, translated "house," is in the margin of your Bibles rendered kindred. The scope of the apostle is to free the church from unnecessary charges, and to that end he doth impose the care of providing for poor kindred, upon such of their relations as were able. (1 Tim. v. 16.)

3. They are to be relieved who are of the congregation or parish whereof we are members, especially they who dwell near unto us, because we may best know their wants. (Deut. xv. 7, 8.)

4. They of whom we have just cause to believe that they are of the household of faith; (Gal. vi. 10.) for we may judge them to be true in their words, and believe their wants are such as they declare them to be. Now amongst the godly, such are especially to be relieved, and to be preferred in our charity, who are imprisoned, or otherwise suffer for Christ and the gospel's sake; for Christ in a special manner is relieved in the persons of such, as he himself will acknowledge at the day of judgment, when he will pronounce that blessed sentence of absolution to such merciful men: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me," &c." (Matt. xxv. 34, 36.)

5. They whom we discern to be in need of present succour, though they be mere strangers, whom we never saw or
knew before. We have a worthy pattern hereof set before us in the good Samaritan. (Luke x. 33, &c.)

6. They who are in prison, or sick, or any other way restrained from making their wants known unto others. (Matt. xxv. 36.)

7. They of whose piety, poverty, and necessity, credible testimony is brought unto us, though we see them not ourselves. Thus many of the christian Gentiles sent relief to the churches at Jerusalem, upon the apostles making known their wants. (Acts xxiv. 17; Rom. xv. 25, 26.)

In these and other like cases, we ought to extend our charity according to the necessity of those whom we relieve, and our own ability, and not think it enough to give a few scraps of bread and meat, or some halfpence or pence, to common beggars at our doors or in the streets. This kind of alms savoureth more of vain, outward ostentation, than of true, inward compassion; and it is more in character with a proud Pharisee than with an humble christian. A charitable christian ordinarily gives more to one whose distressed case he knows, or is credibly made known to him, than these Pharisees do to many beggars at many times.

Quest. But you will say, do you then utterly condemn all giving to common beggars as unlawful?

Ans. For answer to this question, we must distinguish between common beggars: some are strong and lusty, able to work, but would live by the sweat of other men's brows: others again are weak and impotent, unable to work through age, sickness, lameness, blindness, or the like. These latter are fit objects of charity, and therefore ought to be relieved. But the former sort of beggars, namely, the strong and lusty, who are able to work, but will not through
laziness, are no fit objects of charity, and therefore it is no work of charity to relieve such, for—

1. Their trade of life is no warrantable calling—it is a disorderly walking, which is expressly condemned by the apostle, "For," saith he: "even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all." (2 Thes. iii. 10, 11.) It cannot be said of these: "As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk;" or, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called:" (1 Cor. vii. 17, 20.) God hath called none to such a trade.

2. They are as drones in a hive of bees; they live on the labours of others, but bring in nothing to the stock, as all the other bees do. They are as barren trees, which receive sap from the earth, but yield no fruit; unprofitable burdens of the earth, whose sad doom you may read in Luke, xiii. 7.

3. Many of them are of no particular church, nor of any civil society, but out of all government in church and state. In this and the former respect, they may justly be styled children of Belial, without yoke. (Deut. xiii. 13.)

4. They withhold, and in a manner rob the state wherein they dwell, of their labour and pains. The state or kingdom is as a body, all that dwell therein are so many members; now nature teacheth every member to do somewhat for the benefit of the whole. These doing nothing thereto, sin against the light of nature.

5. They who are truly poor, shall by this means be neglected and scanted, whilst these lazy drones devour that which of right belongeth unto them.
6. They are a great scandal and shame to the government of the nation wherein they are: for their course of life implieth that no good provision is made for the poor, nor trouble taken to set such as are able to work, and to relieve such as are impotent. Now it is a great sin to be a shame to one's own country.

7. Their kind of life is sensual and brutish; for as brutes they spend all their days in seeking food for their bodies.

From hence it followeth that they who relieve such, make themselves accessory to the fore-mentioned sins.

There are some reasons alleged for relieving such; but they are unsound reasons, and may easily be answered; the chiefest of them is this:

1. Christ commanded to "Give to every man that asketh of thee." (Luke vi. 30.)

Ans. To this I answer, that that precept is to be taken in reference to a false conclusion of the Pharisees, which was this, that their countrymen and friends alone were their neighbours, whom by the law they were bound to love. That this was their opinion, is evident by this their explanation of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," (Matt. v. 43.) and by the parable which Christ produceth to demonstrate to the lawyer who was his neighbour. In opposition to that false doctrine, Christ commands to give, not to friends only, but "to every man;" (Luke x. 29, 37.) so that the scope of that precept is, to take away respect of persons in almsgiving: that we should not restrain this duty of charity to countrymen, kindred, and friends, but extend it also to strangers, enemies, and to every one who being in need, craveth it of us.
2. A second reason alleged is, that many beggars may perish if they be not relieved.

_Ans._ In case of necessity they may and must be relieved, either at doors, in streets, or other like places, where their necessity is manifested. Necessity, it is said, hath no law, it dispenses with ordinary rules, as for example, the instance which Christ produced concerning David: "He entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful." (Matt. xii. 4.)

I have now done with the question allotted to me, give me leave to add a few words, for the more profitable pressing this most necessary, but much neglected duty of charity; I shall endeavour to do this:

1. By shewing you by what means you may obtain this grace.

2. By giving you some motives to quicken you up to a conscientious performance of the works of it.

The means are these:

I. Meditation, seriously meditate.

1. On the necessity of it, which ariseth from the Lord's express charge and command, unto which we are bound to yield obedience. It is often commanded both in the Old and New Testaments, but that I may not be tedious, I shall only give you two or three proofs. In Deut. xv. 11, (a place I have often mentioned, for the excellency and exceeding suitableness of it to this purpose,) the Lord saith to his people: "The poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land;" that is, thou shalt give unto him freely and bountifully. And our Saviour saith in the New Testament: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that
would borrow of thee turn not thou away." (Matt. v. 42.) And the apostle saith: "To do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;" (Heb. xiii. 16.) in which words he presseth the duty with a forcible motive: for who would not do that which is well pleasing unto God, who is bountiful in rewarding the least good we do upon his command?

This duty of almsgiving being so expressly commanded in Scripture, it is not in our power to omit or neglect the same; neither can any creature give us a dispensation from the Creator's commands. A prophet styleth omission of that which God enjoineth to be done, (yea, though that omission were but in part, and that upon a fair pretence,) "Rebellion, which is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness, which is as iniquity and idolatry." (1 Sam. xv. 23.) Against him who failed in performing the charge enjoined him, though he was a king, this doom is denounced: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." In like manner may God reject such as neglect this duty of charity, when he calls them to it, from being kings and reigning in heaven: we have a manifest instance thereof in Matt. xxv. 41, 42, 43.

Now the giving of alms being a duty so expressly commanded in the Holy Scriptures, it cannot therefore be accounted a matter merely arbitrary, left to a man's own will, to give or not to give; but it is a bounden duty, which they that in any competent measure can do, must not omit, which consideration cannot but be a strong incitative unto us to make conscience of this duty of almsgiving, as occasion is offered, and not to let those opportunities slip by, which by the Divine Providence are offered unto us. Ought we to neglect that which our Lord hath expressly
commanded—that whereunto by virtue of that command we are bound—that whereof we are to give an account? Let us, in obedience to the Lord's commands, do what we can, and when we have done what we can, let us say: "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke xxii. 10.)

2. On the equity of this duty of almsgiving. It is a most equal thing, that he who hath withal, should give to him who hath not. This equity ariseth both from the Divine Providence, and also from the instability of man's state and condition.

1. God for this end gives more to some than to others, that they who have more abundance, should give out of their abundance to them who are in want. This was typically signified by the gathering of manna, which though it was rained down from heaven, yet the Lord would not allow, that they who had gathered much, even more than was needful for themselves and their household, should hoard up their superfluity, but enjoined them to communicate of their abundance to such as had not enough; which the apostle applieth to the giving of alms out of our abundance to those who want, which he styleth "equality." (2 Cor. viii. 14.)

2. Man's state is so variable, that he who now hath, may quickly want; and when in want will desire to be succoured by such as have: it is therefore most equal that they who would be succoured in their need, should be willing to succour the need of others. This equity Christ himself doth press: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" (Matt. vii. 12.) and as a ground to enforce this further, he addeth, "For this is the law and the prophets," hereby implying
that this doctrine is contained in the law and the prophets: but that is not all, these words "This is the law and the prophets," mean that the sum of the law and the prophets consisteth therein, and the main scope of them tendeth thereunto, that is, so far as they contain the duties of man to man. So evident is the equity thereof, even by the light of nature, that the very heathen who wanted the light of God's word, discerned it. Well therefore might the apostle enforce this duty of charity upon this ground, thus: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them," (Heb. xiii. 3.) that is, be helpful to others who cannot help themselves, as you would have others afford succour unto you, if you were succourless.

3. Meditate on the singular benefits which follow, and accompany a conscientious performance of this duty; for thereby we discharge our duty to God, who requireth it at our hands, and as a consequence thereof, we shall glorify God, for it tends much to his praise and glory, when in such works as himself hath commanded, his children testify their obedience and thankfulness; and therefore our Saviour saith: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." (John xv. 8.)

And as by our charity we shall grace and adorn our holy profession, so we shall stop the mouths of wicked men, from speaking any evil of us or our profession: for how are men apt to speak of us and our profession, according to the fruits we bring forth, and the good works which we do.

And as we shall thereby comfort and make glad the hearts of the poor and distressed; so we shall refresh our own souls, in that our works of charity will evidence our faith to be sound and saving, lively and effectual; for as Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die," in
like manner faith saith to the soul of a christian, give me children, let me bring forth good works, else I die, and have no life in me, according to that saying of the apostle St. James, "Faith without works is dead." (James ii. 26.) It is not a living but a dead faith, that manifests not its life by working.

II. As meditation, so prayer is a special means on our part to be performed for attaining unto this grace of charity. I say earnest and fervent prayer unto God for the same; for as he is the Fountain and Author of every good gift, so he hath sanctified prayer as the means of obtaining every good gift from him. Be earnest, therefore, with God in prayer, that he would be pleased to give thee, both a compassionate heart towards the needs and necessities of the poor members of Jesus Christ, and an open hand, that thou mayest freely and liberally contribute unto them, according to their necessity and thy ability. Beg of God, that as he hath blessed thee with some competent estate, so he would add yet this mercy, and give thee an heart to give out proportionably to what he hath given thee; and that in testimony of thy love and thankfulness unto him.

But, alas! how few are there who in their prayers unto God are mindful of this grace of charity—how few are there who ever begged of God, that he would be pleased to implant this noble grace of charity in their hearts. If upon examination thou findest thyself to have been faulty therein, go take up a new resolution to be earnest with God in prayer for this grace especially, and never to give over till thou findest it in some measure wrought in thy soul, till thou find thyself upon all occasions ready to distribute, and willing to communicate to the needs and necessities of thy poor brethren.

III. Diligence in our callings is another means on our
part to be performed, for the practising of charity. He that would be charitable to the poor in their needs and necessities, must be diligent and industrious in his calling, so that he may have wherewithal to express his charity; for men's diligence in their callings is usually crowned with a blessing, according to the saying of the Wise Man: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich;" (Prov. x. 4.) and again, "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat," (chap. xiii. 4.) that is, shall be enriched with outward blessings. And the Greeks say, "That plentifulness follows painfulness," and "that all things are made servants to care and industry." And therefore, the apostle Paul prescribeth diligence and industry in a lawful calling as a means of charity: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." This is one end which we should set before ourselves in the works of our calling, namely, that through God's blessing on our pains and endeavours, we may have, not only sufficient for our own livelihood, and that of those who belong unto us, but also somewhat for the relief of others; Solomon, describing the virtuous woman, saith in the first place that, "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands," and then, that "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." (Prov. xxxi. 13, 20.)

IV. Be careful to prevent all superfluities in your expenses. As diligence in your calling, so frugality in your spending, is a special means for the practice of charity; "Frugality," saith Justin, "is the mother of virtue," I am sure it is the foundation and supporter of charity; for let a man's estate be ever so great, yet if there be not fru-
gality used in the management thereof, there will be but little found for works of charity. And on the other side, though a man's estate be but mean and low in the world, yet if there be frugality used in the management of it, there will always be something for charitable uses. As therefore thou desirest to be charitable, be careful to prevent all unnecessary expenses; I mean, let not thy apparel be too costly; for how can it be expected that they should be charitable, ready to distribute to the necessities of others, who lay out the greatest part of their estates upon their backs. Neither let thy feastings be too frequent, nor too extravagant; which is noticed as one of the sins of the old world, who "were given to eating," (Matt. xxiv. 38.) as the word in the original properly signifieth. Neither let thy recreation be too expensive in playing more for money than for refreshment. Oh! that such of you, who spend so much time and money on your recreations, as if God had sent you into the world, and given you the good things of the world, for no other end than to follow your pleasures, would consider what a fearful reckoning you are to make at the day of judgment, not only of your precious time lavishly misspent, but also of your estate wickedly lost, or wasted: when in thy account there shall be found so much wasted in gaming and pleasures, and so little given to the poor.

V. Set apart something out of thy income and receipts, as a sacred stock for charitable uses; for—

1. Hereby thou wilt be fitted and prepared with matter for such uses, having always something by thee to give upon any good occasion.

2. By this means thou wilt more readily and willingly, more freely and liberally contribute to the needs and neces-
sities of others, having a stock by thee for that very end and purpose. All men are naturally hardhearted and close-handed, and therefore very hard to be persuaded to part with anything considerable for charitable uses; but this consecrating beforehand a part of thine estate for the use of the poor, will cause thy charity to flow out more freely and bountifully.

Now a sacred stock for the poor, may be raised in two ways:

1. By setting apart something every Lord’s day, out of thy comings-in the week before, according as God hath prospered thee; which practice we find prescribed unto us by the direction of the Holy Ghost, and warranted unto us by apostolical authority, for the Apostle Paul saith to the Corinthians: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye, upon the first day of the week,” which is the Lord’s day, “let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him;” (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.) that is, according to the ability wherewith God hath blessed him, let him set apart something for the relief of the poor, especially for the poor saints.

This rule I would recommend to such as live upon their daily labour: but to those merchants, citizens, and tradesmen, who sell much of their goods upon trust, and do not know certainly at the week’s end what they have gained, I would advise them when they have cast up their accounts at the year’s end, to set apart something of their comings-in that year, according as God hath prospered them, for charitable uses, if they would expect God’s blessing upon their trading the year following.

2. By consecrating unto God a certain portion of thy
yearly income and revenues for charitable uses. What this portion should be I dare not determine, the Scripture being silent therein, only in the general, we are commanded to give out proportionably to what God hath given unto us, that they who are rich in this world's good be rich in good works: but this I can say, that the most that I have read of, who have taken this course of consecrating unto God a certain portion of their estate to charitable uses, have followed the example of Jacob; (Gen. xxviii. 22.) and as God greatly blessed him after his vow, so likewise hath he blessed divers others after their vow unto God.

An eminent divine of this city, (the Rev. Thomas Gataker,) now with God, in his funeral sermon at the burial of Mr. John Parker, merchant and citizen of London, speaking of his charity saith, that at the first effectual call, among other things which he resolved upon, this was one: to set apart every year a tenth part of his gains for the relief of the poor, and that God from that time forward abundantly advanced his estate. Another eminent divine, (Mr. Stock) in his funeral sermon at the burial of Lord Harrington, speaking of his charity, declared, that in his lifetime he gave the tenth part of his yearly revenue to the poor. And from mine own experience I can tell you of one yet living, who finding little coming in by his trade, resolved upon two things:—

1. To be more careful in sanctifying the Lord's day.

2. To set apart the tenth of his increase for charitable uses. Whereupon he gained so much in a few years, that he gave up his calling, and ever since has lived upon his rents.

Many like instances I could give you of some that are dead, and others yet living, who have devoted, some a
GOOD WORKS.

137
tenth part, and others a fifth part of their whole estate to pious and charitable uses. These I do not propound as a general rule to all good christians; for some there are who have no more than is necessary for the comfortable support of themselves and family, from whom less is required for the relief of others. But I question whether such whom the Lord hath blessed with a plentiful estate, so that their necessary expenses are, or might be, far less than their incomes, can be accounted "rich in good works," unless they give at least a tenth part of their whole yearly income to charitable uses—I say of their whole yearly income, without first deducting any part thereof for diet, clothes, or any other necessary expenses; for the tenth of the remainder will be a very inconsiderable proportion for a rich man to devote to charity, and far short of that which the Scriptures seem to call for. It is recorded of the Jews, that very many amongst the richer sort, who are devout in their religion, do usually give away a tenth part of their estate to charitable uses; and is it not very unbecoming of christians, who are rich in this world's goods, to fall short of the Jews herein?

Having thus done with the means on our part to be performed for attaining unto this grace of charity, we now come to the motives, to quicken us up to a conscientious performance of the works of it. I shall only touch upon these four:—

I. The excellency of the duty.
II. The piety which is contained in it.
III. The profit which ariseth from it.
IV. The damage which follows upon the neglect thereof.

I. The first motive or inducement to charity may be
taken from the excellency thereof. I suppose that all will grant that the greatest excellency that a creature can attain unto, is to be like his Creator. That excellency wherein man was at first created, is thus described: "God created man in his own image," that is in his own likeness; (Gen. i. 27.) and that excellency wherewith we shall be glorified in heaven, is shewn by our likeness to Christ; for it is said our bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body, (Phil. iii. 21.) yea, in the whole man, "When he shall appear we shall be like him." (1 John iii. 2.) Now while we live on earth, there is nothing wherein we can shew ourselves more like unto God, than in shewing mercy, and in succouring such as stand in need. When God sets himself to proclaim his name, he most insisteth upon his mercifulness and goodness. (Ex. xxxiv. 6.) Christ himself doth press this motive to enforce this duty thus: "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful." (Luke vi. 36.) The excellency of charity doth also further appear, because Christ hath set the poor in his own room; insomuch that they who relieve the poor do thereby relieve Christ himself. This doth Christ acknowledge where he saith to such as succoured the poor: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 40.) Is it not an excellent thing to relieve Christ?—they then that relieve the poor, do an excellent work; as it is a great aggravation of persecuting the true professors of the faith, because therein they persecute Christ himself, which was declared by that Divine voice that affrighted Saul, when he was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts ix. 1, 4.) so it is a great com-
GOOD WORKS.

mendation of true charity, that Christ himself is relieved thereby.

II. Another motive is the piety which in, and by performing this duty of almsgiving is manifested,—piety, I say, to God; for "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction;" (James i. 27.) here he puts two particulars, for all kinds of charity; and by the phrase, pure religion before God is this, he intends four things:—

1. That it is but a mere shew of religion that is without charity.
2. That true religion will make men charitable.
3. That charity will prove men to be truly religious.
4. That works of charity are as acceptable to God as duties of religion: for God accounts charity, "An odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing unto him." (Phil. iv. 18.) The poor and needy are to God, as the altars of burnt offerings and incense were under the law; those things which were laid on them and offered up, were given to the Lord, and as a gift accepted by him; even so are alms given to the poor,—the poor are the altar, alms the sacrifice. Now who would not so dispose of that which he hath, that God may account it given to him, and favourably accept it? On this very ground doth the apostle incite the Hebrews to this duty, in this manner: "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 16.) Thus we see that works of charity are not only useful and profitable to man, but also acceptable and wellpleasing to God, which consideration addeth much life to the duty here pressed.

III. A third motive is the manifold profit wherewith it is rewarded. Profit and advantage is the motive, which for
the most spurs men on to labour and take pains, to rise early and sit up late, to venture goods, life, and all they have: witness the pains, travels, watchings, and adventures, of labourers, workmen, tradesmen, farmers, merchants, mariners, &c., yet that profit which they aim at is but earthly and temporary, and their hope of attaining it uncertain: surely works of charity give an assured hope of far greater, and better profit than earth can afford.

In general it is promised, that if we cast our bread upon the waters we shall find it after many days; that is, if we give alms to the poor, where all we do may seem to be cast away, as if it were thrown into the sea; yet, in due time will it return to us with advantage. And lest any should be discouraged from doing works of charity, our Saviour assureth us, that whosoever giveth but a cup of cold water, (which is one of the least acts of charity we can perform,) shall in no wise lose his reward. (Matt. x. 42.)

If in special, it be demanded, What profit is there in charity? I answer as the apostle did of circumcision, "Much every way;" (Rom. iii. 2.) yea, I may say of charity, as the apostle doth of godliness, "It is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) In this life is promised:—

1. Sufficiency. "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack;" (Prov. xxviii. 27.) that is, he shall be secured from want and penury; God will not suffer him to be brought to penury, who hath been charitable to the poor.

2. Not only sufficiency, but likewise abundance; for saith the Wise Man: "Honour the Lord with thy substance," by giving freely and cheerfully to charitable and
GOOD WORKS.

Pious uses, "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine;" (Prov. iii. 9, 10.) which is an hyperbolical expression implying plenty and abundance.

3. Good success in what he enterpriseth, according to that saying of Moses: "Thou shalt surely give him,—because that for this very thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto." (Deut. xv. 10.)

4. Deliverance out of trouble; for saith the Psalmist, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." (Ps. xli. 1.)

5. Protection against enemies, as it follows in the next verse "Thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies."

6. Succour in sickness, as the prophet goes on, (verse 3) "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing;" that is, the Lord will comfort and support him in his sickness, and at length restore his strength again. "Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;" that is, thou wilt give him ease and rest, as they do to sick men who make their beds.

7. To pass by other particulars, blessedness, which compriseth under it all manner of commodities, is promised to the charitable person. (Prov. xxii. 9.) And (Ps. xli. 2.) it is said: "He shall be blessed upon the earth;" yea, and "At the resurrection of the just." (Luke xiv. 14.)

8. This promise is extended to his posterity, for "His seed is blessed." (Ps. xxxvii. 26.)

These and other like promises of temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, being made by the Lord God of truth, may with much confidence be relied upon; for God's words are
deeds; his promises, performances. In the life to come, merciful men shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. (Matt. xxv. 34.)

There are, among others, two metaphors often used by the Holy Ghost in speaking of almsgiving, which do much amplify the meaning of the word; one is taken from lending, the other from sowing.

1. Almsgiving is set forth in scripture by lending; yea, such a lending, whereby we have not only the principal restored, but with great increase. And whereas such as put forth their money unto men, can expect but six in the hundred; if we in obedience to the command of God, shall freely part with our money to the use of the poor, for their relief, we shall receive an hundred for six,—yea, an hundred for one, and eternal life besides. And we need not doubt of the payment; for though the poor be ever so unable, yet we have an all-sufficient Surety, even God himself, who hath undertaken to pay whatsoever is thus laid out, according to that saying of the Wise Man: "He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again," (Prov. xix. 17.) where you have God's bond to save you from all risk, in which he both acknowledgeth the debt, and promiseth payment. And what better security can any man desire, than a bond under God's own hand? the consideration of this, should, I think, make us willing to embrace any opportunity of putting out our money to this great advantage.

2. As for the other metaphor of sowing, it is in Scripture applied to almsgiving, under this phrase, "He hath dispersed:" (Ps. cxii. 9.) as the husbandman disperseth his seed which he soweth in the earth, so doth the almsgiver his alms; therefore this is added by way of exposition:
"He hath given to the poor." The apostle also applieth unto almsgiving this proverbial speech, "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. ix. 6.) Now what is it that ordinarily bringeth forth a greater increase than sowing seed in fertile ground? It is said of Isaac, that he sowed in the land, and received in the same year an hundredfold, (Gen. xxvi. 12.) and Christ saith, that good ground beareth fruit some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. (Matt. xiii. 8.) Now almsgiving is one of those things that shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. If therefore profit and advantage may be a motive to stir us up unto any thing, surely it should be a motive to incite us unto liberality in almsgiving, to be bountiful in contributing to the relief of the poor; for it is a most certain truth, that giving to the poor is the surest and safest way of getting; for though husbandmen may sometimes lose the benefit of their seed sown, through mildew or unseasonable weather; and such as put their money out to interest, may come short of their principal: yet he who with an honest and sincere heart giveth to the poor, shall in no wise lose his reward; for as the Wise Man speaketh: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," (Prov. xi. 24.) intimating unto us, that this scattering is the best way of increasing; and indeed so it is, for hath not our Saviour promised, that if we give, it shall be given unto us, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over? (Luke vi. 38.) Here God gives us, as it were, a bill of his hand, and enters into a bond, and becomes surety for the poor, that what we give shall be repaid with advantage. This is a paradox to worldly men, that giving should be the
safest way of getting and increasing, yet nothing is more clearly laid down in Scripture, and found to be true by the experience of God's people.

IV. The fourth motive and inducement is the damage which may ensue upon the neglect of almsgiving. Though it argues a kind of servile disposition, to be moved with fear of loss, or hope of gain, to any duty; yet of this disposition are many, and therefore this may be added as an inducement to the duty.

The damage that may arise from the neglect of charity, when it ought to be shewed, is in its kind as great as the benefits of performing this duty are in their kind; for the neglect of the duty doth not only cause a forfeiture of all the fore-mentioned benefits, arising from the performance thereof; but also draweth upon the neglecter's head many evils. Where the Wise Man saith, "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul," he addeth "but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh." Soul and flesh are the two essential parts of a man; both the one and the other are synecdochically put for the whole man, even for the same person. By a cruel man is meant an unmerciful or a hardhearted man; for he is opposed to a merciful man. The meaning of the proverb then is this, as a merciful man doth good not only to his poor brother, to whom he sheweth mercy, but also to himself: so a hardhearted man doth not only grieve his distressed neighbour by affording him no succour, but also brings much damage to himself: for he that withholdeth more than is meet, cometh to poverty. (Prov. xi. 24.) Withholding is there opposed to scattering, which word hath reference to casting or sowing seed on the earth to bring forth a crop; and thereby is meant almsgiving. On the contrary, withholding more than is meet,
implies a denial of alms, when there is just cause to give. Justice and equity require this duty as we have before shewn, so that that phrase doth much aggravate this kind of unmercifulness; and as a just punishment thereof, that which covetous men by refusing to give, seek to prevent, shall fall upon them, even poverty. And if in any distress they shall be forced to seek help of others, even they shall be neglected, as they neglected others. The Wise Man testifieth as much in these words: “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.” (Prov. xxi. 13.) Not only other men but also God himself, will refuse to hear his cry. Dives who refused to relieve Lazarus, could not obtain any to afford him a drop of water to cool his tongue, when he was tormented in the flames of hell. It is expressly said, “He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy;” (James ii. 13.) for God deals with men according to their dealings with others.

Finally, as blessings are promised to merciful men, so curses are denounced against unmerciful men. As under blessings, all manner of good things are comprised; so under curses, all manner of evils. Unmerciful men shall have the curses of men, and the people shall curse them; (Prov. xi. 27.) and at the great day of judgment they shall be pronounced cursed by the great Judge; for, “Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink,” &c. (Matt. xxv. 41—46.)

Having now done with the motives, I shall close this discourse with answering some objections, which
keep back many from a conscientious discharge of this duty.

**Objec. I.** Some object their great expenses, having a wife and many children to provide for; and are ready to say with the apostle, that parents ought to lay up for their children, (2 Cor. xii. 14.) and "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," (1 Tim. v. 8.) how then can we be liberal to the poor?

**Ans. 1.** I deny not that parents ought to provide for their children, so far as they may with a good conscience: but know that the same apostle who commands you to lay up for your children, doth likewise command you to lay out a considerable part of your estate for the succour and relief of others. "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." If therefore, you would prove yourselves sincere christians, you must bear an equal and impartial respect to each and every command of the Lord, making conscience of one duty as well as of another.

2. The greater thy love, and stronger thine affections are to thy children, the more liberal and bountiful shouldst thou be to the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ, that thereby thou mayest entail God's blessing upon the persons and estate of thy children. I am sure thou wilt grant that without God's blessing, all thou shalt bequeath unto thy children will little avail them; and what better course canst thou take to procure God's blessing upon that part of thy estate which thou shalt leave them, than freely to communicate some part thereof to pious and charitable
GOOD WORKS.

uses? for as the Psalmist expresseth it, the seed of the merciful shall be blessed, whereby is implied, that thy mercy and liberality to the poor, will entail God's blessing upon thy children. Many are very solicitous to entail their lands and houses on their posterity, that they may continue in the same family: but I know no surer way, than in their lifetime to communicate a considerable part to the poor; and thus by taking somewhat from your children's portion for the relief of the poor, you may exceedingly advance their estate. Hath God blessed thee with children? then in christian discretion thou shouldst be charitable, that thereby thou mayest procure God's blessing, both on thyself and thy posterity; for thy sparing and withholding from the poor, to make thy children rich, may prove the subversion and ruin of thine house and children.

3. Though thou oughtest to lay up some competent portions for thy children, yet ought not that to be a pretence against laying out a portion of thine estate here on the poor. For know that the poor have a right unto a part of thine estate, as well as thy children, though not unto so great a part; for which cause the Spirit of God calleth that part of the rich man's stock which he can well spare, the poor man's due, unto whom of right it doth belong; for, saith he, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it:" whereupon an ancient father said, "It is the bread of the hungry which moulders in thy cupboard, it is the garment of the naked which hangs useless in thy chamber, it is the gold of the poor which lies rusting in thy chest." So that thy relieving the poor, is not only an act of mercy, left to thy choice to do, or not to do, but also of justice, to the performance whereof thou standest bound; and therefore what
St. Paul saith of himself concerning the preaching of the gospel: "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" the like should all rich men especially say of themselves, necessity is laid upon us, to give out a part of our estate for the relief of the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ, and woe be unto us if we do it not.

4. It is a great mistake in parents to think that because it is their duty to make some provision for their children, therefore they are bound to lay up all that they can possibly scrape together for their use, without giving any considerable part towards the relief of the poor; for thereby they manifestly declare, that they prefer their children's temporal good before their own spiritual and eternal good, and hazard the salvation of their own souls, for the advancement of their children's estate. Oh how little comfort will it be to you in hell torments, to think that you have lost heavenly joys, for the gaining of some earthly enjoyments for your children! If therefore you have little or no charity for others, yet have some for your own souls, by a liberal contribution to the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ, and that according to your own ability and their necessity.

Obj. II. Some object their poor and mean estate, pretending that they have not wherewithal to supply the wants and relieve the necessities of others.

Ans. 1. Though thou pleadest poverty to excuse thy not giving towards the supply of the needy and necessitous, yet it is to be feared that thy plea is not real but feigned; a mere pretence, because thou canst find money enough to buy rich and costly apparel for thyself, wife and children, —money enough to pamper thy belly, and to feast thy rich neighbours, friends, and acquaintances,—money enough for
the gratifying thy sinful lusts and pleasures; when thou canst find little or nothing for the clothing the naked backs of the poor members of Jesus Christ,—nothing for the filling of their empty bellies,—nothing for their comfort and support. Oh, how sad will be thy reckoning at the great day of judgment! when thou shalt hear, so much spent in clothes, so much in costly diet, so much in satisfying thy carnal lusts and pleasures, and so little in relieving the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ.

2. Though thy plea be real, and thou art in truth in a low and mean estate, yet oughtest thou to give something when thou meetest with those that are poorer than thyself, especially if they be in great necessity. The apostle exhorteth poor men, even such as work for their living, so to labour that they may have not only to maintain themselves and family, but also to relieve the necessities of others: "Let him labour," saith the apostle, "working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give him that needeth." (Eph. iv. 28.) The deep poverty of the Macedonians, we read, kept them not from contributing to the poor saints at Jerusalem, who were poorer than themselves. (2 Cor. viii. 1, 2.) Who could plead greater poverty than the poor widow in the gospel, who having but two mites cast them both into the treasury? of whom our Saviour giveth this testimony: that she cast more into the treasury than the rich: "for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." (Mark xii. 43.) A halfpenny or farthing of that little which a poor man giveth, is more in Christ's reckoning than a whole mass of money out of a rich man's treasure. Say not, therefore, I am poor and have but little, thinking thereby to excuse
thy not giving, for thou canst not be poorer than that poor widow; but out of thy little, give a little, and it will be accepted: "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. viii. 12.) God looketh not so much at the greatness of the gift, as at the quantity of the store out of which it is given, and the largeness of the affection wherewith it is given.

Obj. III. Some are ready to object and say, they live in dangerous times, and know not what troubles may befall them, and therefore it will be wisdom to keep what they have.

Ans. The more dangerous the times are, the more reason thou hast to give out of thy store towards the relief of others, for,—

1. Thou knowest not how long thou mayest enjoy thy life or estate: therefore, "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" that is, whatsoever ability or opportunity thou hast of doing good, do it, with all diligence, and speedily. And saith the Wise Man: "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight;" as if he had said, let thy liberality be large and bountiful, not limiting it to few, but distributing it to many; mark his reason in the next words: "For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth;" i.e., what troublesome times shall be. I have read of a husbandman, who hearing of the approach of an army, and fearing thereby the loss of all his corn, caused as much as he possibly could to be carried into the city, and there committed to the custody of a friend of his. In the like manner, let the apprehension of dangerous times prevail with thee to deliver some considerable part of thy estate unto the poor members of Christ, whereby it will be best preserved from loss and ruin.
2. Thy liberality to the poor, will be a certain means of freeing thy heart from those anxious and distrustful fears of evil times, which do usually possess the hearts of unmerciful men, as the Psalmist seemeth to imply: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord;" the reason hereof he also giveth, "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor," therefore he shall not be afraid of evil tidings; and indeed such have not the least ground of fear, for—

1. God hath promised to deliver such from the evil to come, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble."

2. God hath promised, that though they should fall into troublesome times, yet they shall find abundance of sweet peace and comfort in their own souls, for saith the Lord, "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul;" i.e., if thou shalt afford unto him that which may supply his necessity, and satisfy his hunger, "then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day." Here light signifieth peace and comfort, as darkness signifieth affliction: so that the prophet's meaning is, that merciful men shall have peace and comfort in the most troublesome and uncomfortable times; which if it were seriously considered, would be a great encouragement unto us, to abound in works of mercy.

Obj. IV. Some may object and say, if I give away so much, I may want myself before I die.

Ans. 1. Doth the husbandman forbear to sow his seed for fear of want? nay, rather doth he not with a plentiful hand sow his seed, that he may prevent want? being confident that by sowing his seed, he shall in due time reap it again with such increase, that he shall thereby be enabled
to sustain himself and family. So that this objection is a groundless fear, arising from a distrustful heart, contrary to that saying of the Wise Man: "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack," viz., anything which God seeth to be good and needful for him. Nay, by not giving thou art likeliest to come to want; for saith the Spirit of God: "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty:" so that keeping back, and hoarding up, is the readiest way to want and penury; whereas, giving to the poor, according to that which God hath given unto us, is the best means to prevent penury.

2. Thou needest not fear want through giving; for thereby thou wilt both secure thy stock, and increase thy store.

1. What thou givest to the poor, with an honest and sincere heart, will secure the rest of thy estate; for as in a state politic, the ambassadors who are sent abroad to live in foreign kingdoms, do secure a peaceful state at home; in like manner, that which thou dispersest and sendest abroad to the poor, doth secure the rest at home: so that in truth our earthly goods are lost by keeping, and kept by giving away.

2. That which thou givest away to the poor will increase thy store; for, "Give," saith our Saviour, "and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," by which variety of expressions, our Saviour declareth, that charitable men shall not only receive back again from God what they give to the poor, but abundantly more, which the Wise Man implieth when he saith, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth;" intimating that the more we scatter the seeds of our beneficence, the greater our increase will be. And again: "The liberal soul shall be made fat," i.e. he that is bountiful towards
others, shall be enriched himself; "and he that watereth," viz., others with his store, "shall be watered also himself;" that is, shall be abundantly watered with the blessing of God, that he may have wherewith to do more good: whereupon the apostle Paul saith, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully:" thereby hinting unto us, the great gain and increase that we shall receive, by a free and liberal contribution to the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ, which Job acknowledged when he said: "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me," i.e., I had their prayers, and the Lord blessed me extraordinarily for relieving them.

Some doubt there is about the lawfulness of putting out money upon usury; but there can be no question, that to put out a considerable part of thine estate to charitable uses, as it is lawful, so also is it the most gainful usury in the world; for thereby thou shalt receive, instead of six in the hundred, an hundred for six. If therefore, thou wilt be wisely covetous, begin the practice of this christian usury; knowing that the more thou shalt adventure therein, the greater will be thy gain, and the more bountifully thou shalt receive.

Obj. V. Some object that what they give to the poor is utterly lost.

Ans. 1. This is directly contrary to what the Spirit of God saith: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." If that which thou givest to the poor be paid thee again, how can it be said to be lost? It is true, the poor unto whom thou givest, are unable to repay thee; yet, having such an all-sufficient surety as God himself,
who hath undertaken the repayment, thou need'st not doubt thereof.

2. It is a great mistake for men to think, that what they give away to charitable uses is utterly lost; for in truth a covetous scraping, and sordid hoarding up of our wealth, is the only way of losing it: but as I have before shewn, a cheerful distributing part thereof to the poor, is the surest way of securing our stock and increasing our store. I never yet met with a man who could say that he was a loser in his estate by what he gave away to charitable uses. And this I can affirm, that very many have, and are still ready to acknowledge, that as the widow's oil increased by pouring out, so their store hath multiplied and increased by giving away to good uses.

3. What thou givest to the poor is not lost, but sent to heaven before thee. It is reported of Cyrus, that he said, That by doing good, he hoarded up riches for himself: but I am sure, that by communicating part of thy goods to the poor saints and servants of God, thou layest up treasure for thyself in heaven. This is the very argument with the apostle, in the words of the text, enforceth this duty of liberality to the poor; for saith he, "Charge them that are rich in this world that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." Mark his reason in the next words, "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come." Here the apostle intimateth that by laying out on the poor, we do in truth lay up in store for ourselves. See, therefore, that what thou layest out here on good uses, by a bill of exchange (as it were) thou shalt receive as much, yea, much more in the kingdom of heaven; to which agreeeth that saying of St. Austin, "Whatsoever we
give to the poor, we send before us; and we shall find that
in heaven, which we give here on earth."

I have met with a notable story to this purpose, which
I shall relate, because I have known some so affected upon
hearing it, that they have taken up the resolution of com-
municating more liberally to the necessities of the poor,
than ever they did in their lives before. The story is as
follows: Synesius, a good bishop of Cyrene, laboured much,
and for a long time, with one Evagrius, an heathen philo-
sopher, to convert him to the christian faith, but all in
vain; the philosopher still objecting that the christian
religion taught many strange and improbable things;
among others, that "He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth
to the Lord;" and, he that giveth to the poor and needy,
shall have treasure in heaven, and shall receive an
hundredfold from Christ, together with eternal life:
things, said he, to be derided rather than believed. The
good bishop, notwithstanding, ceased not to labour with him,
assuring him by many arguments, that these things were
true, and at last prevailed, so that the philosopher and all
his children were baptized. A short time after, he cometh
to Synesius, and bringeth with him three hundred pounds
of gold for the poor, and bid him take it; but would have
a bill under his hand, that Christ should repay him in
another world. Synesius took the money for the poor,
and gave him such a bill under his hand as he desired.
Afterwards the philosopher being near his death, com-
manded his sons, that when they buried him, they should
put Synesius' bill into his hand in the grave, which they
did. The third day after he was buried, the philosopher
seemed to appear to Synesius in the night, and said to
him: "Come to my sepulchre where I lie, and take thy
bill, which for thine assurance I have subscribed with mine own hand; for I have received the debt, and am satisfied.”

The bishop, not well knowing the meaning thereof, sent to his sons, who told him all; whereupon, taking them and the chief men of the city with him, he went to the grave, and found the paper in the hand of the corpse, thus subscribed: “Ego Evagrius philosophus, tibi Sanctissimo Domino Synesio Episcopo salutem. Accepi debitum in his literis manu tua, conscriptum, satisfactumque mihi est; et nulum contra te habeo jus propter aurum quod dedi tibi, et per te Christo Deo et Salvatori nostro.” That is, “I, Evagrius the philosopher, to thee most holy sir, Bishop Synesius, greeting, I have received the debt which in this paper is written with thy hand, and am satisfied, and have no action against thee, for the gold which I gave thee, and by thee to Christ our God and Saviour.”

This story I say I was willing to relate at large, not only because it passeth in antiquity for a great though strange truth, but also because as I before said, I have known it related to some with such good effect and success, that I hope and heartily wish it may have the same upon thy spirit.

4. Thy works of charity to the poor saints and servants of Jesus Christ, will hereafter be rewarded with everlasting glory and happiness in heaven: this much our Saviour expresseth by declaring that the kingdom of heaven was from the foundation of the world, prepared for the merciful, who had shewn themselves bountiful to the poor members of Jesus Christ, by clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, &c. And, saith our Saviour, “He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man’s reward.”
As, by receiving a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, is shewing kindness to him for his righteousness' sake: so, by receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet, is not only a receiving of his message and ministry, but also a receiving of his person, by shewing kindness to him, either in entertaining him, or contributing to his wants and necessities; and doing this, because he is a minister of the gospel. And by the prophet's and righteous man's reward, which such as relieve them shall receive, is meant that surpassing and excellent weight of glory in heaven which cannot be expressed by the tongues of men or angels. Not that their works of charity do merit that glorious reward; but because of the promise of God, made to all those who in faith apply themselves to the practice of good works.

Obj. VI. Many there are, who make a great profession of religion, but manifest little power thereof in their lives, being as backward to any good work, and as barren therein as any others.

Ans. I must confess there is more truth in this objection than in any that I have before met with; for I cannot but acknowledge that there are too many whose leaves of profession are very broad, but their fruits of charity and liberality are very small; who are a shame to religion, a reproach to christianity, and a scandal to their profession. But this may be taken for an answer, that whereas many who make a profession of religion, are barren in good works; doubtless they are no sincere christians—no true converts, but mere outside professors: for most certain it is, that the elect of God put on bowels of mercies, as the apostle Paul saith: therefore whosoever he be, that having this world's goods, doth make a profession of religion, and yet shutteth up his bowels of compassion from his poor brother, and will
not communicate towards his necessities; let his profession be ever so specious and glorious in the eyes of men, yet certainly he is but a rotten professor, and a dissembling hypocrite in the sight of God; for, saith the apostle James, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction:" implying that works of charity are clear evidences of the truth of our religion, and of the sincerity of our profession. If you look into the Scriptures you can scarcely read of a truly godly man, but he was charitable; nay, according to his eminency in godliness, he was eminent in works of charity: to mention a few—

Abraham, the father of the faithful, as he was eminent in godliness, so was he eminent in hospitality, which is one of the noblest works of charity: for we read how Abraham stood in his tent door, and no sooner saw strangers passing by, than he called them in, and gave them entertainment. As there was none in his days like Job, for piety and godliness, of whom God himself giveth this testimony: "That there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." so neither was there any like Job for liberality. Read what he saith of himself: "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me," i.e. I had many hearty prayers and good wishes from them whom I relieved in their low and perishing condition: "and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy," i.e. by my bounty and liberality to her in her necessity, I gave her great cause for hearty joy. And afterwards Job declareth that he had not according to the manner of covetous and churlish persons, eaten his bread alone, without giving part thereof to the hungry orphans. Neither had he seen any perish for want
of clothing, by which expressions are implied his readiness to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, with other like acts of charity.

It is recorded to the perpetual praise and commendation of good Obadiah, that in the time of famine and persecution, he not only hid the prophets of God by fifty in a cave, from the cruelty of Jezebel in a cave; but that also in that extreme dearth, he there sustained them with food, and supplied their necessities.

We read of Cornelius, that as he was a godly and devout man, so also he was very charitable; for the Spirit of God giveth this testimony of him, that he was: "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people." He was not only charitable, but did abound in works of charity, giving much alms to the poor.

We likewise read of Gaius, who is recorded as being a godly, wealthy citizen of Corinth, that he did usually in his house entertain, not only the apostle Paul, but also all christians resorting to that city.

The apostle Paul, who was a holy, zealous christian, was likewise charitable; for in his epistle to Timothy, in reckoning some of his graces, such as his faith, patience, long suffering, &c., he mentions charity.

Yea, we read of Zaccheus, that though before his conversion he was a most covetous extortioner; yet, after his conversion, he gave half of his goods to the poor; for said he, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor."

But the most remarkable, is the charity of the primitive christians, who being converted by the ministry of the apostles, and having embraced the christian faith, it is said, that "As many of them as were possessors of lands or
houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostle's feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." Thus you see, it hath ever been the character of a sincere christian and true believer to be charitable; and certainly, whosoever by a true and lively faith is ingrafted into Jesus Christ, cannot but be a fruitful branch, bringing forth the fruits of mercy and compassion, of charity and liberality towards his poor brethren.

I shall conclude, therefore, with a passage from Mr. Robert Bolton, (now with God,) in his "Directions for a comfortable walking with God:"—

"If the world hath locked up thine heart, and congealed the bowels of thy compassion towards the poor, let the blaze of thine outward profession be ever so fair, manage the heartless representations of external holiness ever so demurely, keep the times and tasks of daily duties with ever so great austerity,—nay, though thou be able to amaze weaker christians with some affected strains, and artificial fervency in prayer; for all this, if the holy heat of brotherly love doth not warm thine heart, and upon occasion work affectionately and effectually, I dare to say, thou art rotten at the heart-root, there is no true love of God in thee—no grace—no hope of salvation."

"Let that terrible and flaming place against all covetous Pharisees; 'Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' Let it, I say, dissolve thy frozen-heartedness this way, and enlarge thy bowels of pity towards the poor brethren of Jesus Christ; or else never expect hereafter to look him in the face with comfort, or to find mercy at that day."
SCRIPTURE TESTIMONIES

FOR

DOING GOOD TO THE POOR.

Exodus xxii. 25.—If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.

Chap. xxiii. 6.—Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause.

Verse 11.—But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of my people may eat.

Leviticus xix. 10.—And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God.

Chap. xxiii. 22.—And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the Lord your God.

Chap. xxv. 25.—If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold, &c.
Verse 35.—And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee.

Verse 39.—And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant, &c.

Deuteronomy xv. 7, 8, 10, 11.—If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Thou shalt surely give him and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Chap. xxiv. 14, 15.—Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, &c. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.

1 Samuel ii. 7, 8.—The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.
Job. v. 15, 16.—But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty. So that the poor hath hope, &c.

Chap. xxix. 12, 13, 16.—Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not, I searched out.

Chap. xxxi. 16, 19, 20.—If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; &c.

Chap. xxxiv. 28.—They cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

Chap. xxxvi. 15.—He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

Psalm ix. 18.—For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.

Psalm x. 14.—The poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

Psalm xii. 5.—For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

Psalm xiv. 6.—Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge.

Psalm xxxiv. 6.—This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Psalm xxxv. 10.—All my bones shall say, Lord, who is
like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is
too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him
that spoileth him?

Psalm xxxvii. 26.—He is ever merciful, and lendeth;
and his seed is blessed.

Psalm xli. 1, 2, 3.—Blessed is he that considereth the
poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The
Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall
be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him
unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen
him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his
bed in his sickness.

Psalm lxviii. 10.—Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy
goodness for the poor.

Psalm lxix. 33.—For the Lord heareth the poor, and
despiseth not his prisoners.

Psalm lxxii. 4, 12, 13.—He shall judge the poor of the
people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall
break in pieces the oppressor. For he shall deliver the
needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath
no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall
save the souls of the needy.

Psalm lxxxii. 3, 4.—Defend the poor and fatherless: do
justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and
needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

Psalm cix. 31.—For he shall stand at the right
hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his
soul.

Psalm cxii. 9.—He hath dispersed, he hath given to the
poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; &c.

Psalm cxxxii. 15.—I will abundantly bless her pro-
vision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.
Psalm cxl. 12.—I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.

Psalm cxlvi. 7.—Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry, &c.

Proverbs xi. 24.—There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

Chap. xiv. 21, 31.—But he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

Chap. xvii. 5.—Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker: &c.

Chap. xix. 17.—He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Chap. xxi. 13.—Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

Chap. xxii. 9, 16, 22, 23.—He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor. He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want. Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: For the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

Chap. xxviii. 27.—He that giveth unto the poor, shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Chap. xxix. 7, 14.—The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it. The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.
Chap. xxxi. 9.—Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

Isaiah xi. 4.—But with righteousness shall he judge the poor.

Chap. xiv. 30.—And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety.

Chap. xxv. 4.—For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, &c.

Chap. xli. 17.—When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

Chap. lviii. 7.—Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Jeremiah xx. 13.—Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers.

Chap. xxii. 16.—He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him, &c.

Daniel iv. 27.—Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, &c.

Zephaniah iii. 12.—I will leave also in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.
FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Matthew x. 41, 42.—He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Chap. xix. 21.—Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," &c.

Luke vi. 38.—Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.

Chap. xiv. 13, 14.—But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Chap. xix. 8.—And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, &c.

Romans xv. 26.—It hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians ix. 6, 7, 9.—But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. God loveth a cheerful giver. He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor, &c.

Galatians ii, 10.—Only they would that we should re-
member the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

James ii. 5.—Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, &c.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE CHARACTER OF THE TRULY PIOUS AND CHARITABLE MR. THOMAS GOUGE, FROM ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON'S SERMON AT HIS FUNERAL.

Of his piety towards God, which is the necessary foundation of all other graces and virtues, I shall only say this, that it was great and exemplary; but yet, very still and quiet, without stir or noise; and much more in substance and reality, than in shew and ostentation; and did not consist in censuring and finding fault with others, but in the due care and government of his own life and actions, and in exercising himself continually to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men: in which he was such a proficient, that even after long acquaintance and familiar conversation with him, it was not easy to observe anything that might deserve blame. He particularly excelled in the more peculiar virtues of modesty, humility, meekness, cheerfulness, and in kindness and charity towards all men.